

# Groton Daily Independent

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## Monday, Aug 19

Senior Menu: Beef stroganoff with noodles, green beans, vanilla pudding, mandarin oranges, whole wheat bread.

Faculty Inservice, 8 a.m.

Boys golf at Sioux Valley (Volga), 10 a.m.

6th grade welcome walk at GHS, 4 p.m.

Elementary school open house, 4 p.m.

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

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

Groton Senior Citizens meet at the Community Center, 1 p.m.

## Tuesday, Aug. 20

Senior Menu: Lemon chicken breast, au gratin potatoes, 3 bean salad, pineapple/strawberry ambrosia, dinner roll.

Faculty Inservice, 8 a.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Council meeting, 6 p.m.

## Groton Daily Independent

PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445

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

United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.  
Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 209 N Main, 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Pantry Open, Groton Community Center, 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.

City Council Meeting, 7 p.m.

Girls Soccer: Garretson in Groton, 6 p.m.

## Wednesday, Aug. 21

Senior Menu: Hamburger cabbage roll hot dish, mixed vegetables, muffin, pears.

School Breakfast: Cereal.

School Lunch: Cheese stuffed breadstick with marinara sauce.

First day of school

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship at Rosewood Court, 10 a.m.

United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.

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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.**

## **DNC Kicks Off**

The Democratic National Convention kicks off today in Chicago, the start of four days of political speeches ending with the selection of the party's candidate for president. Vice President Kamala Harris is slated to speak Thursday night, formally accepting the party's nomination. President Joe Biden is set to speak tonight. See the full schedule here.

Outside the proceedings, thousands of protesters are expected to call for a cease-fire in Gaza, an issue dividing the Democratic Party. Chicago officials said they had added additional security in anticipation.

National poll averages show Harris with a roughly one-to-two-point edge; her lead over former President Donald Trump falls within the polling margin of error in most swing states.

Election Day is Tuesday, Nov. 5.

## **Venu Sports, Blocked**

A federal judge temporarily blocked the launch of Venu Sports Friday on antitrust grounds. The decision comes a week before the sports-only streaming service was reportedly set to debut in advance of the NFL season.

Venu—a joint venture from Disney's ESPN, Fox, and Warner Bros.—planned to charge subscribers \$42.99 per month for access to 15 live sports channels. Offerings are set to include the companies' entire sports portfolios, including professional football, basketball, hockey, and tennis, as well as college football and basketball. Each company had agreed to one-third ownership of the platform, which sought to secure 5 million customers in five years.

The judge's ruling sided with competitor streaming service FuboTV, which accused Disney, Fox, and Warner Bros. of creating a monopoly to drive up prices—an argument supported by Sens. Bernie Sanders (I-VT) and Elizabeth Warren (D-MA). Venu plans to appeal the ruling.

## **Perseverance's Climb**

NASA's Perseverance rover is set to begin its most daring climb yet this week, embarking on a monthslong expedition up the western rim of Mars' Jezero crater to a summit scientists have called Aurora Park.

Since landing on the red planet in February 2021, the car-sized lab has collected over 20 rock cores in four campaigns, traveling a collective 18 miles. Among Perseverance's contributions are rock samples supporting the theory the crater was once a vast, watery lake around 3.5 billion years ago. The rover has not yet discovered evidence of life on Mars; some promising rock samples require analysis upon their return to Earth.

Perseverance's latest journey will see the rover climb an estimated 1,000 feet in elevation, traversing slopes as steep as 23 degrees on rocky, unpaved terrain. Scientists have identified two locations in particular for further study, with bedrock indicating a climate very different from that of Mars today.

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## Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Alain Delon, world-renowned French acting and pop culture icon, dies at age 88.

John Aprea, actor best known for "The Godfather Part II," dies at age 83.

Indiana Fever's Caitlin Clark breaks WNBA's 26-year-old record for assists in a single season by a rookie.

Poland's Kasia Niewiadoma wins women's 2024 Tour de France, topping defending champion Demi Voltering of the Netherlands by four seconds.

## Science & Technology

European Space Agency's JUICE mission to begin first-ever double gravity boost—using both the Earth's and Venus' gravity to slingshot the spacecraft—en route to study Jupiter's icy moons/

Researchers find new type of nanoparticle in the human bloodstream that may aid in the diagnoses of cancer and other diseases; RNA strands packed into extracellular material reveal changes in the presence of tumors/

Astrophysicists discover new form of "whistler," a type of electromagnetic radiation carrying energy into Earth's magnetosphere/

## Business & Markets

US stock markets close higher Friday (S&P 500 +0.2%, Dow +0.2%, Nasdaq +0.2%) to close out the best week in 2024 following encouraging economic data on retail sales, labor market.

X to remove staff from Brazil, suspend local operations after saying a top judge threatened to arrest its legal representative if X did not remove accounts the court has accused of spreading election-related misinformation.

Two Canadian railroads' dispute with Teamsters union representing 10,000 workers could disrupt US economy if deal isn't reached this week; the railroads collectively handle an estimated \$1B in trade daily.

## Politics & World Affairs

Russia denies report suggesting previous plans for indirect talks with Ukraine to protect energy, power infrastructure.

Libya's Central Bank says it is suspending all operations after head of IT was kidnapped in the capital of Tripoli; group responsible not identified.

Indian doctors strike alongside thousands of supporters following the rape and murder of a junior physician earlier this month.

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## Weekly Vikings Roundup

By Jordan Wright

The Minnesota Vikings are 2-0 this preseason, after defeating the Cleveland Browns 27-12 this past Saturday. Unlike the first preseason game, the Vikings came out firing, scoring 13 points in the first quarter. The Browns never had a lead, and the Vikings never looked back.

Nick Mullens got the bulk of the playing time at quarterback, completing 11 of 21 passes for 135 yards and a touchdown. Jaren Hall took over late and looked good in limited action, completing four of five passes for 87 yards and two touchdowns, including a beautiful throw to Jeshuan Jackson for a 71-yard score.

The Vikings' running game was on point, with Kene Nwangwu leading the way with seven carries for 45 yards. It was the best he's looked since being drafted in 2021. The Vikings' top two RB spots are locked up, with Aaron Jones 1A and Ty Chandler 1B. Nwangwu has a stronghold on the third spot on the depth chart, especially considering his kick return ability. Myles Gaskin and DeWayne McBride are battling for the last RB spot, and although McBride has the benefit of being a recent draft pick (7th round, 2023), it was Gaskin who has the lead in the competition thanks to a productive day on the ground against the Browns (nine carries for 45 yards).

The Vikings' top two receivers didn't play on Saturday, which gave the rest of the WRs a chance to make their case. Nailor started the game and had an impressive catch for 31 yards, and was quickly pulled from action, which tells me he has the third WR spot locked up. Jashaun Jones led the team with 71 yards, but that might not have been enough to move in front of Trishton Jackson (three catches for 39 yards, one TD, and a team-high four targets), Trent Sherfield Sr. (one catch for 23 yards), and Brandon Powell (two catches for 19 yards).

The bulk of the starters along the offensive line didn't play in this game, except for right guard Ed Ingram, who played a big chunk of the game as the Vikings' coaches try to figure out if he's going to be the week one starter. Luckily for him, his main competition Dalton Risner has been injured and unable to practice much since being re-signed.

Defensively, this was the first time Lewis Cine has looked like someone who belongs in the NFL. Since being a first-round draft pick in 2022, Cine has either been injured or unable to see the field because the coaching staff didn't trust him. On Saturday, Cine led the team with 11 tackles to go along with an interception, a sack, a tackle for a loss, and two QB hits. Besides Cine, undrafted rookie Dwight McGlothorn had another good game, highlighted by an interception he returned for 91 yards. Brian Asamoah had a good game, as well as undrafted rookie Bo Richter.

Now for the bad news

If you missed the news, rookie J.J. McCarthy was injured in the team's first preseason game. The 10th overall pick had surgery this past week to repair a knee injury, and he will miss the entire season. This was a huge blow to a team and fanbase that felt it had finally found a franchise quarterback to build around. Now we will have to wait a year and hope he comes back healthy and ready to lead the team in 2025.

To make matters worse, receiver Jordan Addison was carted off the field during a practice session last week. The team doesn't think the ankle injury will keep him out of the regular season, but it's disheartening, especially with all the other bad news coming out of Minnesota these past few weeks.

In a bit of good news, however, the Vikings signed cornerback Stephon Gilmore. The 33-year-old CB is a five-time Pro Bowler who was named to the AP First-Team All-Pro list in both 2018 and 2019. He was also voted the Defensive Player of the Year in 2019, the first time a cornerback has earned the award since Charles Woodson in 2009. Gilmore rejoins Brian Flores, as the two were with the New England Patriots together. While he may be, without a doubt, the most decorated CB on the roster, he might not have much left in the tank.

Looking ahead, the Vikings travel to Philadelphia to take on the Eagles in the final preseason game of 2024. The game will be on Saturday, August 24 at noon (CT).

## The Life of Marlys Torgerson



Marlys Torgerson, 85, of Sioux Falls, South Dakota passed away on Friday, August 16, 2024, at Avera McKennan Hospital in Sioux Falls. Funeral services will be 1:00 p.m., Thursday, August 22, 2024, at East Side Lutheran Church in Sioux Falls. Visitation will be from 12:00 p.m. until the time of service at church. George Boom Funeral Home has been entrusted with arrangements. An online guestbook is available at [www.georgeboom.com](http://www.georgeboom.com)

Marlys L. Thorstensen was born May 24, 1939 on the William and Lela Boom farm at rural Dalesburg, South Dakota. She was the second daughter of Theodore and Mable (Boom) Thorstensen.

As an infant, Marlys was baptized into the Lutheran faith, but attended the Nazarene Churches until adulthood when she was confirmed at Hope Lutheran Church in Sioux Falls on December 22, 1963.

Marlys grew up on various farms west of Irene, South Dakota and attended country school at Plainview #32 for seven years.

After her father's death in 1952, the family moved to Viborg, South Dakota.

In 1957 Marlys was united in marriage to Edwin Stratmeyer. To this union two children were born: Debbie and Darrell.

In 1962 Marlys married Myron Torgerson at the First Lutheran Chapel in Sioux Falls. To this union three children were born: Eugene, Nancy, and Monty.

In 1970 the family moved to Groton, South Dakota where they lived for 25 years.

Ever since Marlys was 14 years old, she worked in various cafes, nursing homes, and many years under different managers at the Groton Legion Lounge.

In 1982 she took care of her mother until her passing on October 31, 1982. Marlys continued working in Home Health Care until 1989 when she fell and became disabled.

In 1995 Marlys moved to Baltic, South Dakota and in 2000 moved back to Sioux Falls.

Marlys was a past member of the Rebekah's of Groton and the Moose Lodge of Aberdeen, South Dakota since 1973. She also played baseball and belonged to bowling leagues in her younger years.

Marlys is survived by her children, Debra (Jack) Stansbury of Sioux Falls, Darrell Schuur of Sioux Falls, Eugene Torgerson of Sioux Falls, Nancy (Leon) Bartscher of Sioux Falls, and Monty (Kris) Torgerson of Tea; grandchildren, Tori (Andrew) Marco, Chrystal (John) Sheaff, Mallory (Jason Stiles) Kellar, Ben Kellar, Kortney Torgerson, and Seth Torgerson; great grandchildren, Jordan Peters, Gavin Marco, and Brooklyn Sheaff; and a host of extended family.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Theodore and Mable; sisters, Gloria Fenken and Marilyn Gregoire; and niece, Cindy Carruth.

## Our Brain's Happy Hormones

By: Curstie Konold MPH, LCSW, QMHP

Our brain releases chemicals into our body that impact functions in our body, such as our mood. There are four chemicals that commonly support "feeling good," and they are also known as "happiness chemicals." These four chemicals are dopamine, oxytocin, serotonin, and endorphins.

Dopamine provides us with pleasure, motivation, and learning. Known as the reward chemical, dopamine may help us feel determined to accomplish our goals or meet our needs. Oxytocin is often known as the love hormone, and it creates a feeling of trust and security in maintaining relationships and bonding with others. Serotonin is often known as the mood stabilizer, and is the chemical that helps in regulating our moods. It often helps us with accepting ourselves, the people around us, and feeling significant within our relationships. Finally, endorphins are the natural "pain killer" in our body that releases a response to pain or stress to help in alleviating physical pain, anxiety, or depression. When we have a deficiency in each of these hormones, it can affect us in negative ways.

Dopamine deficiencies can lead us to procrastinate, have low self-esteem, lack motivation, have low energy, feel fatigued, struggle to focus, and feel anxious or hopeless. Natural ways to increase dopamine levels in our body may include meditation, self-care, creating long term goals, creating a daily to-do list to maintain organization, celebrate small wins, regular exercise, and being creative through writing, music or art.

Oxytocin deficiencies can leave us feeling lonely, stressed, lack motivation, have low energy or fatigue, feel disconnected, feel anxious, and experience insomnia. Some natural ways to increase oxytocin may include physical touch from a loved one, socializing, massage, acupuncture, listening to music, regular exercise, meditation, or giving others compliments.

Serotonin deficiencies can lead to low self-esteem, feeling overly sensitive, feeling anxiety, having panic attacks, mood swings, feeling hopeless, feeling nervous about social events, experiencing obsessions, and experiencing insomnia. Natural ways to increase serotonin may be spending time outdoors, meditating, regular exercise, cold showers, sunlight and massage.

Endorphin deficiencies can lead to anxiety, depression, mood swings, aches and pains, insomnia and impulsive behavior. Natural ways to increase endorphins may be laughing, creating music, art or writing, eating spicy foods, regular exercise, stretching, massage, and helping others.

By working to become aware of deficiencies we may be experiencing within our body, we can implement natural skills to increase release of the happiness chemicals. This is one positive way we can take care of our mental health and increase our mood in a positive way.

*Curstie provides outpatient therapy for across the lifespan for adults, adolescents, and children starting at age 4. She utilizes a trauma-informed approach for people struggling with anxiety, depression, abuse, trauma, interpersonal issues, grief and social and emotional wellness. Her practice includes play therapy, solution-focused therapy, strengths-based therapy, and cognitive behavioral therapy and mindfulness strategies. Follow The Prairie Doc® at [www.prairiedoc.org](http://www.prairiedoc.org) and on Facebook featuring On Call with the Prairie Doc® a medical Q&A show providing health information based on science, built on trust for 22 Seasons, on SDPB and streaming live on Facebook most Thursdays at 7 p.m. central.*



## EARTHTALK ™

Dear EarthTalk: Are there any grasses for lawns and paths that don't need mowing or that need very little mowing attention?

-- Johanna R, Northampton, MA

Most of the grass across the U.S. is a species known as Kentucky Bluegrass, which might not be the best choice where the environment is a concern. While it may have a soothing soft texture and vibrant color, it requires a decent amount of effort to maintain including extensive mowing year-round. Luckily, there are a variety of other options that will keep lawns looking nice and take less effort. Additionally, there has been a recent surge in grass alternative lawns as they require significantly less maintenance.



**Clover lawns can be planted over grass lawns for an easy installation process — and are low growing meaning little to no mowing!** Credit: Pexels.com.

Grass species grow in two primary categories; warm season thrivers and cool season thrivers (Kentucky Bluegrass is the latter). Some of the warm season grasses that provide a greener alternative to Kentucky Bluegrass include Bermudagrass and Buffalo grass. Bermudagrass grows deep, complex root systems, helping to make it durable in high heat, humidity and drought conditions. It does not need mowing outside of temperatures 65 degrees and above but may need mowing twice a week in peak growing season. Meanwhile, buffalo grass needs sun to grow but is contained in its growth. It will grow in thick clumps reaching 8 inches tall and does not require mowing. If allowed to mature, buffalo grass will flower and attract native wildlife. If the grower aims for a manicured look, this grass can be mowed intermittently.

Greener low maintenance cool season grasses include tall fescue and sheep fescue. Tall fescue is a thin, naturally tall grass that requires almost no maintenance besides mowing in the growing season. Outside of this season, the grass needs no mowing. Sheep fescue is similar, though slower growing. The dense root system protects the area from invasive weeds and requires minimal mowing in the warmer months.

Alternatives to grass lawns include clover lawns, moss lawns or eco-lawns which are a combination of two or more alternatives. Clover lawns are the most popular grass alternative lawns. They can be planted over grass lawns for an easy installation process and are low growing meaning little to no mowing! Clover lawns, attract pollinators, foster healthy biodiversity, and are a natural weed killer—and they do not require much water. Experts have ranges of mowing recommendations from never to once a month. Mazus is similar to clover as it grows very close to the ground, does not need mowing beyond landscaping purposes, and has some resilience to foot traffic.



## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

### COMMENTARY

## Bayer attempts to leverage rural GOP lawmakers to end glyphosate litigation

**The company drafted language for congressional ag committees to include in the new Farm Bill that would prohibit such lawsuits**  
by **DAVE DICKEY, INVESTIGATE MIDWEST**

Over the last couple of decades covering agribusiness, I've come to this ironclad factoid ... the Republican Party is generally more sympathetic than the Democratic Party to the interests of Big Ag – the industrial complex that produces the majority of our food. One needs to not go far beyond Farm Bill debates to see the truth.

Every five years, Congress must re-authorize the Farm Bill, an act that regulates safety net programs, farm loans, disaster assistance, and conservation. And here's the thing. Democrat lawmakers tend to focus on protecting and expanding safety net programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and generally concede most decision making about agricultural programs to the Republicans.

And that suits Big Ag just fine because it is the GOP that far and away represents rural America – farm country.

USDA's 2022 Census of Agriculture shows that the GOP controls the top 21 congressional districts in the nation as measured by sales of agricultural commodities. And 81 of the top 100 congressional districts. All this is not lost on Big Ag, which has found Republicans more than helpful to shove some piece of favored legislation onto the President's desk.

It's the same at the state level. With the exception of Illinois and Minnesota, Republicans have partisan control of the farm belt.

All of which takes us to the ongoing struggles of Bayer to once and for all rid itself of glyphosate lawsuits. Ever since purchasing Monsanto in 2018, glyphosate, the active ingredient in Roundup weed killer, has been an albatross around its neck. The German pharmaceutical company is losing billions of dollars in court verdicts finding glyphosate contributing to non-hodgkin's lymphoma.

The federal courts have consistently ruled against Bayer's efforts to show such lawsuits are, in fact, preempted by the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act. Plaintiffs routinely argue that Bayer's glyphosate labels fail to warn that product usage could potentially lead to non-hodgkin's lymphoma. Plaintiffs then say that FIFRA outlaws the sale of any pesticide that has been misbranded, suggesting Bayer has a legal duty to warn about the dangers of glyphosate usage.

For its part, Bayer maintains the Environmental Protection Agency has never determined glyphosate can cause cancer and that FIFRA specifically prohibits states from requiring a cancer warning if the warning is "different from or in addition to" the federally approved label.

Unfortunately for Bayer, the courts don't agree. Most recently the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals in *Carson v. Monsanto* denied Bayer's request for an en banc review of a three-judge panel ruling finding "FIFRA does not impliedly preempt the warning that Georgia law would require."

Neither was the Ninth Court of Appeals sympathetic to Bayer's arguments, finding in 2021 in *Hardeman v. Monsanto* that the plaintiff's failure-to-warn claim was not preempted by FIFRA because of the prohibition on misbranding.

With the federal courts by and large less than helpful, Bayer is likely exploring the possibility of using the bankruptcy courts for a get-out-of-jail free card.



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That's not all. Bayer is also looking to leverage its relationships with all those GOP lawmakers out in rural America to pretty please prevent people from suing over glyphosate. Full stop.

There's currently a Bayer full court press in the Federal House and Senate agriculture committees to write into the new farm bill language to end glyphosate litigation. Language drafted by Bayer.

Bayer is also knocking on the door of all those farm states with GOP partisan governments. Bayer's plan is to use its influence among elected officials to draft bills to take away the ability to sue over glyphosate.

Iowa is illustrative. A couple of Bayer flacks recently presented their draft bill to an Iowa House subcommittee on agriculture. The measure quickly passed out of the subcommittee and awaits consideration by the House Committee on Agriculture.

"Notwithstanding any provision to the contrary, for any pesticide registered with the United States environmental protection agency under the federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act, U.S.C. §136 et seq., the 6 label approved by the United States environmental protection agency in registering the pesticide, or a label consistent with 8 the most recent human health assessment performed under the federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act, or a label consistent with the United States environmental protection agency carcinogenicity classification for the pesticide under the federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act, shall be sufficient to satisfy any requirements for a warning regarding health or safety under chapter 206, any other provision or doctrine of state law, including without limitation the duty to warn, or any other common law duty to warn."

Similar Bayer lobbying efforts are also underway in Idaho. And Florida. And Missouri. It appears Bayer will truly stop at nothing to mitigate its legal exposure to glyphosate. Consider the ethically questionable Texas two-step. Prevent people from suing because you might just lose? Bring it on. Anything to save a buck. Look for a friendly court to bail you out and create the possibility of the Supreme Court accepting certiorari? Just another Monday. Well it isn't the government's job to clean up Bayer's mess by giving it a pass.

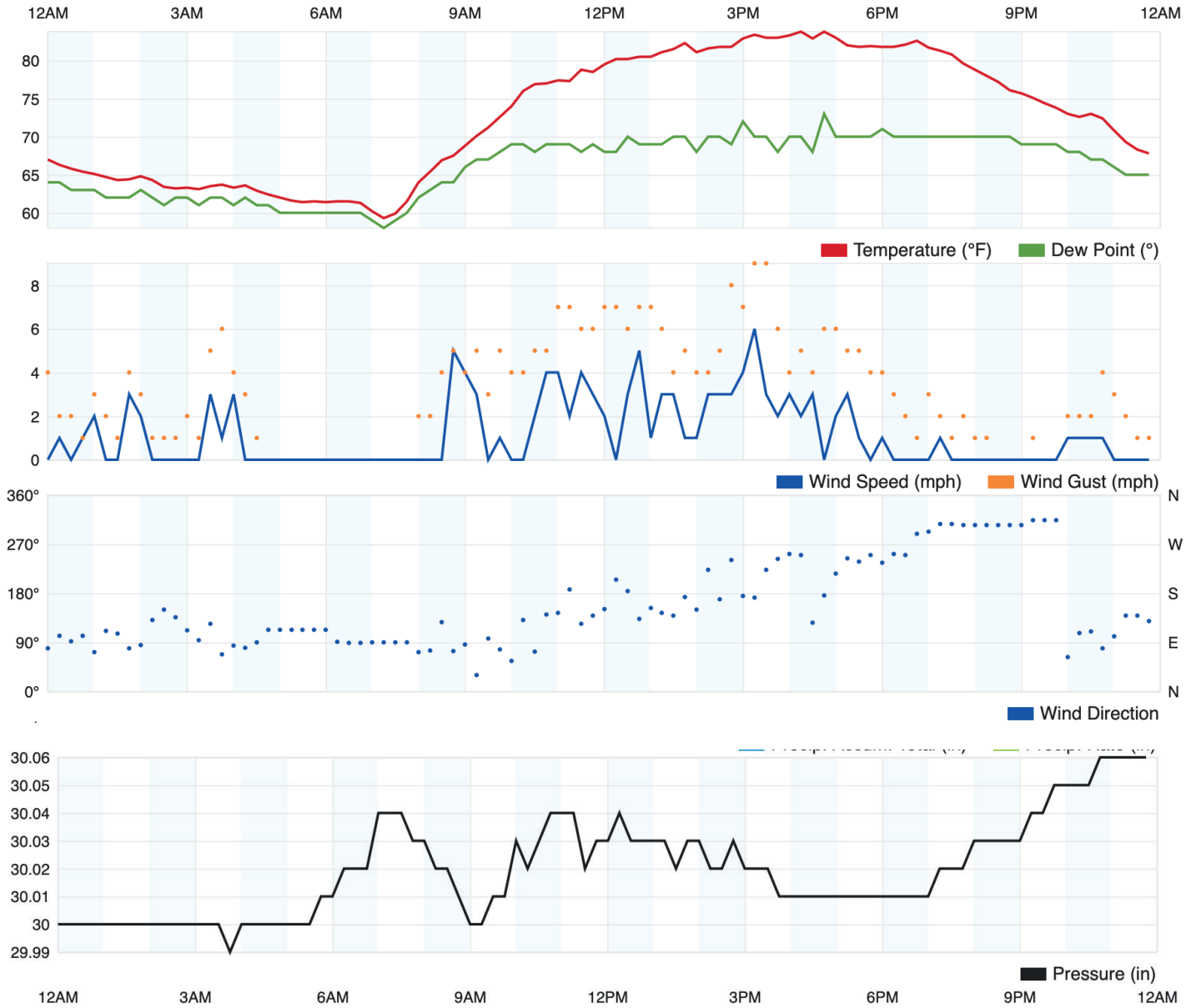
This is how Big Ag generally operates. And it gets away with despicable behavior because the American public isn't aware of all the shenanigans. If the public truly knew of how it's being taken to the cleaners by the agricultural complex it would be furious. If only ...

*David Dickey served tours in the U.S. Marine Corps and U.S. Navy, is a 1988 graduate of the University of Illinois College of Media, and spent 28 years at the University of Illinois NPR member station WILL-AM 580. During the last 13 years of his career at WILL, he served as the station's director of agricultural programming. He started contributing on a freelance basis to Investigate Midwest in 2015. His focus is on national agricultural issues that often cross over into state agricultural or local agricultural policy.*

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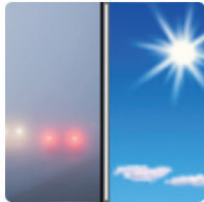
## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today



High: 85 °F

Patchy Fog  
then Sunny

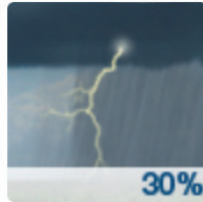
Tonight



Low: 64 °F

Partly Cloudy

Tuesday



High: 77 °F

Chance  
T-storms

Tuesday Night



Low: 61 °F

Slight Chance  
T-storms

Wednesday



High: 80 °F

Mostly Sunny

## Forecast For Early Next Week

Tonight



Clear to partly  
cloudy

Lows: 60 - 63°

Monday



20-50% chance of  
showers/storms  
Monday night into  
Tuesday  
- Over central SD

Highs: 81 - 90°  
Lows: 62 - 66°

Tuesday



20-50% chance  
scattered showers and  
thunderstorms

Highs: 75 - 85°  
Lows: 60 - 63°

National Weather Service Aberdeen, SD



Quiet conditions expected tonight through Monday. Scattered showers and thunderstorms (20-50%) move into central South Dakota late Monday night into Tuesday with the precipitation moving eastward across the forecast area through the day on Tuesday.

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 84 °F at 4:48 PM

Low Temp: 59 °F at 7:14 AM

Wind: 9 mph at 3:13 PM

Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 13 hours, 56 minutes

## Today's Info

Record High: 103 in 1976

Record Low: 34 in 2004

Average High: 83

Average Low: 56

Average Precip in Aug.: 1.37

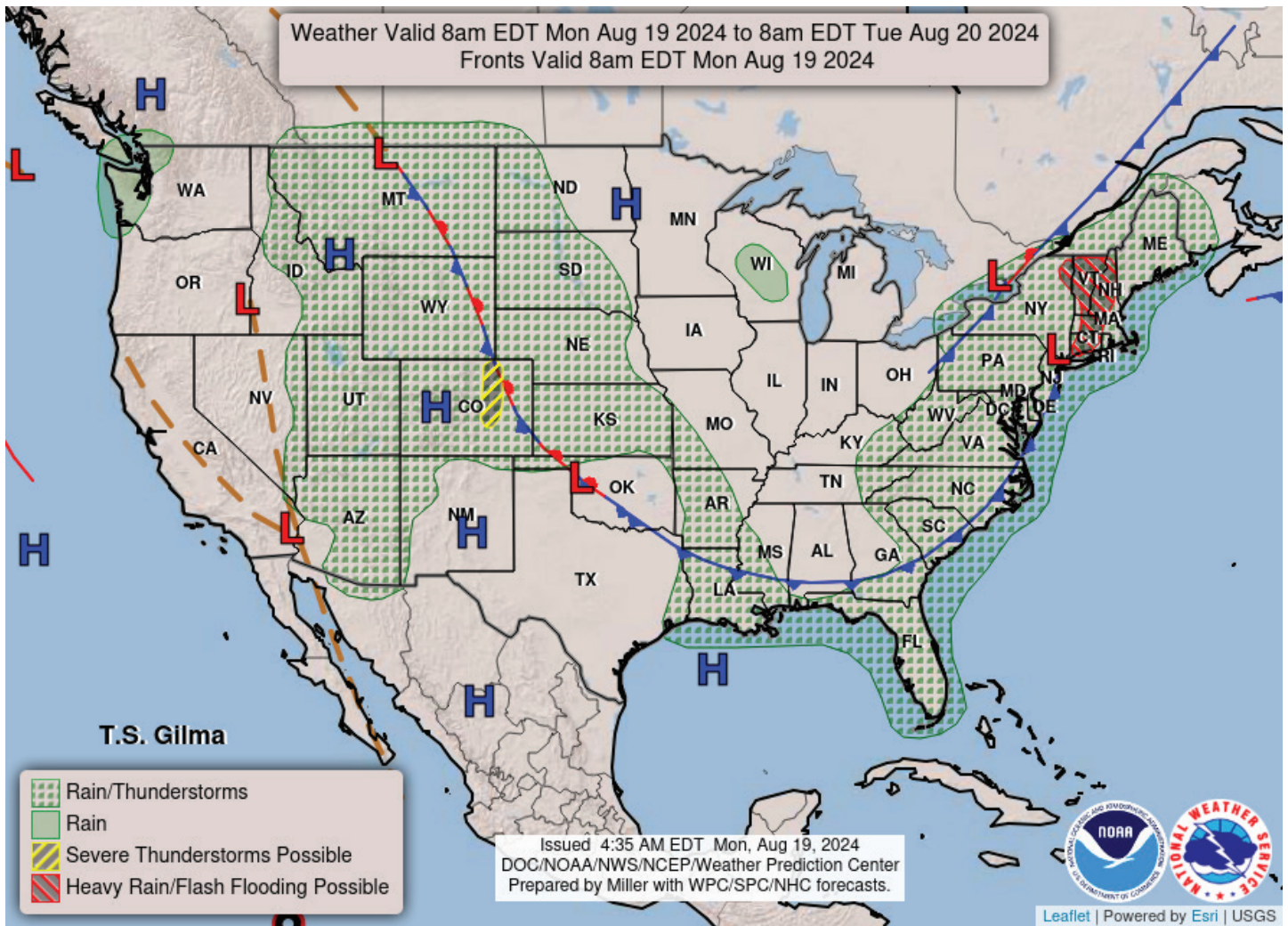
Precip to date in Aug.: 4.13

Average Precip to date: 15.47

Precip Year to Date: 19.02

Sunset Tonight: 8:34:08 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:38:46 am



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## Today in Weather History

August 19, 1899: An estimated F3 tornado passed 3 miles north of Clear Lake. The tornado killed a man by flying debris as five homes, and many barns were destroyed.

August 19, 1983: Between 0155 and 0330 CST, thunderstorm winds blow through Brown County. At 0155, an estimated 64 mph wind gust was observed on the southeast corner of Warner. A 60 mph wind gust was measured at the Aberdeen Airport at 0218. By 0330 an estimated wind gust of 75 mph was observed in Ordway.

August 19, 1991: A thunderstorm produced about five inches of rain, strong winds, and hail in Ridgeview, Dewey County. Three-grain bins were blown over. One of the bins hit a house causing considerable damage. Wind gusts were estimated to be 60 mph. High winds continued into Sully and Hughes Counties.

1788 - A small but powerful hurricane inflicted great havoc upon forests along a narrow track from New Jersey to Maine. A similar storm track today would cause extreme disaster in the now populated area. (David Ludlum)

1890: An estimated F3 tornado hit South Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. About 400 buildings were destroyed in the industrial and more impoverished residential section of town. The death toll was 16 and damage was estimated at \$400,000.

1896: The famous Cottage City (Oak Bluffs) waterspout occurred off Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts. The vortex was 3,600 feet high, formed three times, and was well photographed. Click [HERE](#) for more information from the Boston Globe.

1969 - 'Never say die' Camille let loose a cloudburst in Virginia resulting in flash floods and landslides which killed 151 persons and cause 140 million dollars damage. Massies Hill VA received 27 inches of rain. (David Ludlum)

1986 - The temperature at San Antonio, TX, soared to an all-time record high of 108 degrees. (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders - 1987)

1987 - Thunderstorms moving out of southeastern Nebraska spread severe weather into eastern Kansas and western Missouri during the day. Thunderstorms in Nebraska produced hail three inches in diameter at Albion, and high winds which downed a large tent at Waterloo injuring a dozen persons. Thunderstorms in Kansas produced baseball size hail northwest of Topeka, and wind gusts to 80 mph at Fulton. Ten persons were injured in a thunderstorm at Princeton KS, and damage to crops in southern Franklin County KS was estimated at 3.5 million dollars. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Raleigh, NC, reported a record hot temperature reading of 103 degrees. Afternoon thunderstorms in Oklahoma produced wind gusts to 75 mph in southern Pittsburgh County. Thunderstorms in Indiana produced 4.50 inches of rain at Morgantown. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Early morning thunderstorms deluged southeastern Delaware with six to ten inches of rain in four to six hours, with local reports of 13 to 20 inches of rain. Twenty-six major roads were closed or damaged, and fourteen bridges were washed out. Flooding caused nearly four million dollars damage to local businesses. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)



## Start Where You Are!

A pastor once thought that it was his responsibility to change the world. For years he struggled and worked. He finally became so discouraged that he decided to quit.

In a moment of insight, he decided to utilize a new strategy. "I'll change my Elders. That's the place for me to begin." But he soon realized that this was not going to happen. Their resistance was fierce, and he soon gave up.

"Since they didn't respond," he said to himself, "I'll change my family." That didn't work either. Each evening when he laid out their tasks for the next day they looked at him with blank stares.

Finally, he identified his calling: "I must improve myself first and the others will follow."

David got it right! He said, "Search me, O God, and know my heart. Test me and know my thoughts."

It is much easier to look at the lives of others and see things that we think they need to change. It is also much easier to want to change them than to want to change ourselves. But seeing what needs to be changed in others and wanting to change them is not the way God works through us. He wants us to begin with ourselves – to see the sin that is in our lives – the sin that He sees. And when He removes the sin from our lives we become like Him, we will become an example for others to follow.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help us not to be concerned about what others need to change in their lives, but what we need to change in our lives to be more like You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Psalm 139:23-24

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

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## WINNING NUMBERS

### MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS: 08.16.24

22 38 48 51 61 5

MegaPlier: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$498,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 25 Mins 35 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 08.17.24

4 26 38 42 50 9

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$7,190,000**

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 40 Mins 35 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 08.18.24

2 4 11 32 39 18

TOP PRIZE:

**\$7,000/week**

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 55 Mins 35 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 08.17.24

12 16 25 31 32

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$20,000**

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 16 Hrs 55 Mins 35 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 08.17.24

9 12 25 51 56 22

TOP PRIZE:

**\$10,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 24 Mins 35 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 08.17.24

12 31 43 45 46 22

Power Play: 5x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$44,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 24 Mins 35 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

### **Indian doctors demand tougher laws after a colleague was raped and killed at a hospital**

NEW DELHI (AP) — Hundreds of doctors protested near India's Health Ministry on Monday to demand stringent laws to protect health care workers from violence and to seek justice for their colleague who was raped and killed at a state-run hospital.

The protesting doctors, holding up placards like "Justice delayed is justice denied," were stopped by police as they tried to set up free outpatient services outside the ministry in New Delhi.

Doctors and medics across India have held protests, candlelight marches and temporarily refused care for non-emergency patients after the rape and killing of the 31-year-old trainee on Aug. 9 in the eastern city of Kolkata, the capital of West Bengal state.

The doctors say the assault highlights the vulnerability of health care workers in hospitals and medical campuses across India. They are demanding stronger laws, including making any attack on on-duty medics an offense without the possibility of bail, increase in security at hospitals and safe spaces for them to rest.

"If a lady is not safe at a workplace, at a hospital ... then I wonder which lady in this country is safe?" said Daisy Singh, a protesting doctor.

The government has asked the doctors to return to work and said it will set up a committee to look into their demands.

The rape and killing of the trainee doctor at Kolkata city's R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital has also focused rage on the chronic issue of violence against women.

A police volunteer working at the hospital has been arrested and charged with the crime, but the family of the victim alleges it was a gang rape and more people were involved. Federal investigators were handling the case.

Thousands of people, particularly women, have marched in the streets of Kolkata demanding justice for the doctor. They say women in India continue to face rising violence despite tough laws that were implemented following the gang-rape and murder of a 23-year-old student on a moving bus in Delhi in 2012.

That attack had inspired lawmakers to order harsher penalties for such crimes and set up fast-track courts dedicated to rape cases. The government also introduced the death penalty for repeat offenders.

Despite tougher legislation, sexual violence against women has remained a widespread problem in India. In 2022, police recorded 31,516 reports of rape — a 20% jump from 2021, according to the National Crime Records Bureau.

### **House Republicans release impeachment report on President Biden, but next steps are uncertain**

By LISA MASCARO and FARNOUSH AMIRI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Republicans have released their initial impeachment inquiry report into President Joe Biden, alleging an abuse of power and obstruction of justice in the financial dealings of his son Hunter Biden and family associates.

The nearly yearlong inquiry by Republicans stops short of alleging any criminal wrongdoing by the president. Instead, the almost 300-page report out Monday ahead of the Democratic National Convention covers familiar ground, asserting the Biden family traded on its "brand" in business ventures in corrupt ways that rise to the Constitution's high bar for impeachment.

With Biden no longer running for reelection, next steps are highly uncertain. House Republicans have not had support from their own ranks to actually impeach the president, and removal by the Senate is even further afield. Many Republicans prefer to focus attention on the Democratic Party's presumptive presidential nominee Vice President Kamala Harris, with some probes getting underway.

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The White House has dismissed the House impeachment inquiry as a "stunt" and encouraged House Republicans to "move on."

"The totality of the corrupt conduct uncovered by the Committees is egregious," wrote the House Oversight and Accountability, Judiciary and Ways & Means panels leading the inquiry.

The report said the Constitution's "remedy for a President's flagrant abuse of office is clear: impeachment by the House of Representatives and removal by the Senate."

Republicans have spent the better part of their time in the House majority with a hyper focus on Biden and his family's businesses, encouraged by Donald Trump as the twice impeached and indicted former president makes a comeback bid for the White House.

The impeachment inquiry has been a cornerstone of the House GOP's effort, launched by former Speaker Kevin McCarthy shortly before he was booted from leadership and formalized in December under new Speaker Mike Johnson. Republicans are investigating many aspects of Biden family finances going back to 2009 when he was vice president to Barack Obama.

Through bank records, interviews from some 30 witnesses, whistleblower accounts and millions of documents, House Republicans allege a years-long practice by Hunter Biden and his associates to solicit foreign business deals using the family's proximity to power in Washington.

Much of the focus of the report is not on Biden's time as president, but on the years when the Biden family was in turmoil after the 2015 death of his oldest son, Beau, and as the vice president was bowing out of elected office, declining to run for president in 2016.

Hunter Biden has acknowledged a serious addiction to crack in these years. He was convicted in June of felony gun charges and is set to stand trial next month on federal tax charges.

Former Hunter Biden associate Devon Archer, who was sentenced to a year in prison in 2022 in another matter, told the committee, "At the end of the day, part of what was delivered is the brand."

To tie the elder Biden to his son's actions, the Republicans rely on a series of phone calls and pop-by dinner meeting visits Joe Biden made while Hunter was conducting business. At times, Hunter would put his dad on speakerphone for his guests as the father and son exchanged pleasantries.

The Bidens are a famously tight-knit family and acknowledge they speak almost daily, including during this time, with the father checking on his son's well-being.

In his own defiant closed-door deposition to House investigators, Hunter Biden insisted he did not involve his father in his business.

All told, the House Republicans allege the Biden family and its associates received some \$27 million in business payments from partners or clients in Russia, China and other countries. They allege another \$8 million in loans, including some from Hunter Biden benefactor Kevin Morris, a Hollywood attorney, and question the purchases of the son's artwork.

The report said it is "inconceivable" that President Biden did not understand what was going on.

"President Biden participated in a conspiracy to monetize his office of public trust to enrich his family," the report claims.

Biden himself declined a request to testify before the House.

Touchbacks to Trump's impeachments at the hands of Democrats run throughout the report's pages as Republicans work to contrast his grounds for removal to Biden family's dealings and "grift."

But the difference are stark, as the indicted Trump faces actual criminal charges, including in the conspiracy to overturn Biden's 2020 election and draw supporters to Washington on the day of the Jan. 6, 2021, Capitol attack.

The report also accuses Biden of obstructing justice in the probe, revisiting previously aired complaints about the Justice Department's handling of investigation into Hunter Biden. Attorney General Merrick Garland has forcefully denied those accusations, defending the department against claims of political influence.

It focuses heavily on what Republicans have long alleged was a pattern of "slow-walking" investigative steps and delaying enforcement actions to the benefit of the president's son.

But the report provides no evidence that Biden had any involvement in his son's investigation, which was launched under Trump's presidency and has been led by a Delaware U.S. attorney appointed by Trump.

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The U.S. attorney, David Weiss, was kept on by Garland to insulate the probe from claims of political interference.

Garland has insisted that no one at the White House gave him or other senior officials at the Justice Department direction about the handling of the Hunter Biden investigation.

Beyond Hunter Biden, the report includes details of the involvement of Joe Biden's brother, James, in the various family businesses.

Republicans have pointed to a series of payments that they claim show the president benefited from his brother's work. They point to a \$200,000 personal check from James Biden to Joe Biden on the same day in 2018 that James Biden received an equal amount from Americore, a healthcare company.

House Democrats have defended the transaction, pointing to bank records they say indicate James Biden was repaying a loan provided by his brother, who had wire transferred \$200,000 to him about six weeks earlier. The money changed hands while Joe Biden was a private citizen.

Short of impeaching Biden, the House Republicans have issued criminal referrals recommending the Justice Department prosecute Hunter Biden and James Biden, accusing them of making false statements to Congress as part of the GOP investigation. Attorneys for those men have argued those claims are baseless or a distraction.

Until recently, the president had been a focal point for Republicans in Congress, but his decision last month to drop out of the presidential race and Harris' ascent to the top of the ticket have forced GOP leaders to reevaluate their marquee investigation.

A year ago, GOP lawmakers had hoped the Biden inquiry would build a strong enough case for impeachment's "high crimes and misdemeanors." But the longer the inquiry dragged and the little direct evidence against Biden investigators were able to produce in public hearings or even in closed-door sessions, the more concerns grew from moderate Republicans wary of a vote on the matter.

The report released Monday makes more than 20 mentions of the "Biden-Harris administration," while previous releases from the committees investigating Biden typically only made direct references to him.

And while Harris is not mentioned on her own in the report, the same committees leading the inquiry have begun to open new probes into her and her vice presidential pick, Tim Walz.

## **Chinese and Philippine ships collide again in disputed waters, and the countries are trading blame**

By SIMINA MISTREANU and JIM GOMEZ Associated Press

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP) — Chinese and Philippine coast guard ships collided at sea, damaging at least two vessels, in an encounter early Monday near a new flashpoint in their increasingly alarming confrontations in the disputed South China Sea.

Each blamed the other for the collision near Sabina Shoal, a disputed atoll in the Spratly Islands, where Vietnam and Taiwan also have overlapping claims. There were no reports of injuries.

China's coast guard accused the Philippines of deliberately crashing one of its ships into a Chinese vessel. It said in a statement on its website that two Philippine coast guard ships entered waters near the shoal, ignored a warning from the Chinese coast guard and intentionally collided with one of the Chinese boats at 3:24 a.m.

"The Philippine side is entirely responsible for the collision," spokesperson Gan Yu said. "We warn the Philippine side to immediately stop its infringement and provocation, otherwise it will bear all the consequences arising from that."

Jonathan Malaya, assistant director-general of the Philippine government's National Security Council, accused the Chinese coast guard of falsely saying the Philippine coast guard ships had rammed its vessels.

Video and photographs, including ones taken by journalists from a U.S. TV network who were on board one of the Philippine coast guard ships, showed that the Chinese ships caused the collisions, Malaya told a news forum in Manila.

The Philippines' National Task Force on the West Philippine Sea said two of the coast guard ships, BRP

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Bagacay and BRP Cape Engaño, "encountered unlawful and aggressive maneuvers" from Chinese coast guard vessels while en route to Patag and Lawak islands, which are occupied by Filipino forces, in the contested region.

"These dangerous maneuvers resulted in collisions, causing structural damage to both Philippine Coast Guard vessels," the statement said.

The task force said the collision between BRP Cape Engaño and one of the Chinese ships created a hole in the deck of the Philippine ship about 5 inches (12.7 centimeters) in size.

About 16 minutes later, the other Philippine ship, BRP Bagacay, was rammed twice on its port and starboard sides by a different Chinese vessel, leading to structural damage, the task force said.

"This is the biggest structural damage we have incurred as a result of the dangerous maneuvers carried out by the Chinese coast guard," Commodore Jay Tarruela of the Philippine coast guard said at the news forum.

The task force said the Philippine coast guard "stands firm in its responsibility to ensure the safety and security of our maritime domain while addressing any threats to our national interests."

Gan, the Chinese coast guard spokesperson, said China claims "indisputable sovereignty" over the Spratly Islands, known in Chinese as the Nansha Islands, including Sabina Shoal and its adjacent waters. The Chinese name for Sabina Shoal is Xianbin Reef.

In a separate statement, he said a Philippine ship that was turned away from Sabina Shoal entered waters near the disputed Second Thomas Shoal, ignoring the Chinese coast guard's warnings. "The Chinese coast guard took control measures against the Philippine ship in accordance with law and regulation," he added.

China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs also blamed the Philippines for the incident. "Not only did they ignore China's coast guard's warnings, the vessels deliberately collided into Chinese coast guard vessels that were carrying out law enforcement operations in a dangerous manner," ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said at a daily briefing Monday.

Sabina Shoal, which lies about 140 kilometers (85 miles) west of the Philippines' western island province of Palawan, has become a new flashpoint in the territorial disputes between China and the Philippines.

The Philippine coast guard deployed one of its key patrol ships, the BRP Teresa Magbanua, to Sabina in April after Filipino scientists discovered submerged piles of crushed corals in its shallows that sparked suspicions that China may be preparing to build a structure at the atoll. The Chinese coast guard later deployed a ship to Sabina in a new territorial faceoff.

Sabina is near Philippine-occupied Second Thomas Shoal, which has been the scene of increasingly alarming confrontations between Chinese and Philippine coast guard ships and accompanying vessels since last year.

China and the Philippines reached an agreement last month to prevent further confrontations when the Philippines transports replacement sentry forces, along with food and other supplies, to Manila's territorial outpost in Second Thomas Shoal, which has been closely guarded by Chinese coast guard, navy and suspected militia ships.

The Philippine navy transported food and personnel to Second Thomas Shoal a week after the deal was reached and no incident was reported, sparking hope that tensions in the shoal would ease. But Monday's incident raises questions about whether the deal will make a difference.

"We are of course disappointed again," Malaya said. "Despite this preliminary understanding, which we hoped was the first page in a new chapter between the Philippines and (Chinese) relations, we have ... another incident."

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao said, "We hope the Philippines will keep its promise, earnestly abide by the preliminary agreement it has reached with China, and not take actions that could complicate the situation so as to work with us to jointly manage and control the maritime situation."

China has been at odds with many other countries in the Asia-Pacific for years over its sweeping maritime claims, including almost all of the South China Sea, a strategic and resource-rich waterway.

Beijing is rapidly expanding its military and has become increasingly assertive in pursuing its territorial

claims, giving rise to more frequent confrontations, primarily with the Philippines, though it is also involved in longtime territorial disputes with Vietnam, Taiwan, Malaysia and Brunei.

U.S. Ambassador MaryKay Carlson said on the social media platform X that the United States stands with the Philippines "in condemning the China coast guard's dangerous maneuvers near Sabina Shoal that endangered lives and caused damage" to the two Philippine vessels. "We are committed to supporting the rights of our friends, partners, allies under international law," the statement said.

A 2016 arbitration ruling by a United Nations tribunal invalidated Beijing's claims in the South China Sea, but China did not participate in the proceedings and rejected the ruling.

## Too many people, not enough management: A look at the chaos of 'overtourism' in the summer of 2024

By LAURIE KELLMAN Associated Press

SINTRA, Portugal (AP) — The doorbell to Martinho de Almada Pimentel's house is hard to find, and he likes it that way. It's a long rope that, when pulled, rings a literal bell on the roof that lets him know someone is outside the mountainside mansion that his great-grandfather built in 1914 as a monument to privacy.

There's precious little of that for Pimentel during this summer of "overtourism."

Travelers idling in standstill traffic outside the sunwashed walls of Casa do Cipreste sometimes spot the bell and pull the string "because it's funny," he says. With the windows open, he can smell the car exhaust and hear the "tuk-tuk" of outsized scooters named for the sound they make. And he can sense the frustration of 5,000 visitors a day who are forced to queue around the house on the crawl up single-lane switchbacks to Pena Palace, the onetime retreat of King Ferdinand II.

"Now I'm more isolated than during COVID," the soft-spoken Pimentel, who lives alone, said during an interview this month on the veranda. "Now I try to (not) go out. What I feel is: angry."

This is a story of what it means to be visited in 2024, the first year in which global tourism is expected to set records since the coronavirus pandemic brought much of life on Earth to a halt. Wandering is surging, rather than leveling off, driven by lingering revenge travel, digital nomad campaigns and so-called golden visas blamed in part for skyrocketing housing prices.

Anyone paying attention during this summer of "overtourism" is familiar with the escalating consequences around the world: traffic jams in paradise. Reports of hospitality workers living in tents. And "anti-tourism" protests intended to shame visitors as they dine — or, as in Barcelona in July, douse them with water pistols.

The demonstrations are an example of locals using the power of their numbers and social media to issue destination leaders an ultimatum: Manage this issue better or we'll scare away the tourists — who could spend their \$11.1 trillion a year elsewhere. Housing prices, traffic and water management are on all of the checklists.

Cue the violins, you might grouse, for people like Pimentel who are well-off enough to live in places worth visiting. But it's more than a problem for rich people.

"Not to be able to get an ambulance or to not be able to get my groceries is a rich people problem?" said Matthew Bedell, another resident of Sintra, which has no pharmacy or grocery store in the center of the UNESCO-designated district. "Those don't feel like rich people problems to me."

What is 'overtourism,' anyway?

The phrase itself generally describes the tipping point at which visitors and their cash stop benefitting residents and instead cause harm by degrading historic sites, overwhelming infrastructure and making life markedly more difficult for those who live there.

It's a hashtag that gives a name to the protests and hostility that you've seen all summer. But look a little deeper and you'll find knottier issues for locals and their leaders, none more universal than housing prices driven up by short-term rentals like Airbnb, from Spain to South Africa. Some locales are encouraging "quality tourism," generally defined as more consideration by visitors toward residents and less drunken behavior, disruptive selfie-taking and other questionable choices.

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"Overtourism is arguably a social phenomenon, too," according to an analysis for the World Trade Organization written by Joseph Martin Cheer of Western Sydney University and Marina Novelli of the University of Nottingham. In China and India, for example, they wrote, crowded places are more socially accepted. "This suggests that cultural expectations of personal space and expectations of exclusivity differ."

The summer of 2023 was defined by the chaos of the journey itself — airports and airlines overwhelmed, passports a nightmare for travelers from the US. Yet by the end of the year, signs abounded that the COVID-19 rush of revenge travel was accelerating.

In January, the United Nations' tourism agency predicted that worldwide tourism would exceed the records set in 2019 by 2%. By the end of March, the agency reported, more than 285 million tourists had travelled internationally, about 20% more than the first quarter of 2023. Europe remained the most-visited destination. The World Travel & Tourism Council projected in April that 142 of 185 countries it analyzed would set records for tourism, set to generate \$11.1 trillion globally and account for 330 million jobs.

Aside from the money, there's been trouble in paradise this year, with Spain playing a starring role in everything from water management problems to skyrocketing housing prices and drunken tourist drama.

Protests erupted across the country as early as March, when graffiti in Malaga reportedly urged tourists to "go f—— home." Thousands of protesters demonstrated in Spain's Canary Islands against visitors and construction that was overwhelming water services and jacking up housing prices. In Barcelona, protesters shamed and squirted water at people presumed to be visitors as they dined al fresco in touristy Las Ramblas.

In Japan, where tourist arrivals fueled by the weak yen were expected to set a new record in 2024, Kyoto banned tourists from certain alleys. The government set limits on people climbing Mount Fuji. And in Fujikawaguchiko, a town that offers some of the best views of the mountain's perfect cone, leaders erected a large black screen in a parking lot to deter tourists from overcrowding the site. The tourists apparently struck back by cutting holes in the screen at eye level.

Air travel, meanwhile, only got more miserable, the U.S. government reported in July. UNESCO has warned of potential damage to protected areas. And Fodor's "No List 2024" urged people to reconsider visiting suffering hotspots, including sites in Greece and Vietnam, as well as areas with water management problems in California, India and Thailand.

Not-yet-hot spots looked to capitalize on "de-touristing" drives such as Amsterdam's "Stay Away" campaign aimed at partying young men. The "Welcome to MonGolia" campaign, for example, beckoned from the land of Genghis Khan. Visits to that country by foreign tourists jumped 25% the first seven months of 2024 over last year.

Tourism is surging and shifting so quickly, in fact, that some experts say the very term "overtourism" is outdated.

Michael O'Regan, a lecturer on tourism and events at Glasgow Caledonian University, argues that "overtourism" has become a buzzword that doesn't reflect the fact that the experience depends largely on the success or failure of crowd management. It's true that many of the demonstrations aren't aimed at the tourists themselves, but at the leaders who allow the locals who should benefit to become the ones who pay.

"There's been backlash against the business models on which modern tourism has been built and the lack of response by politicians," he said in an interview. Tourism "came back quicker than we expected," he allows, but tourists aren't the problem. "There's a global fight for tourists. We can't ignore that. ... So what happens when we get too many tourists? Destinations need to do more research."

Of visitors vs being visited

Virpi Makela can describe exactly what happens in her corner of Sintra.

Incoming guests at Casa do Valle, her hillside bed-and-breakfast near the village center, call Makela in anguish because they cannot figure out how to find her property amid Sintra's "disorganized" traffic rules that seem to change without notice.

"There's a pillar in the middle of the road that goes up and down and you can't go forward because you ruin your car. So you have to somehow come down but you can't turn around, so you have to back

down the road," says Makela, a resident of Portugal for 36 years. "And then people get so frustrated they come to our road, which also has a sign that says 'authorized vehicles only.' And they block everything."

Nobody disputes the idea that the tourism boom in Portugal needs better management. The WTTC predicted in April that the country's tourism sector will grow this year by 24% over 2019 levels, create 126,000 more jobs since then and account for about 20% of the national economy. Housing prices already were pushing an increasing number of people out of the property market, driven upward in part by a growing influx of foreign investors and tourists seeking short-term rentals.

To respond, Lisbon announced plans to halve the number of tuk-tuks allowed to ferry tourists through the city and built more parking spaces for them after residents complained that they are blocking traffic.

A 40-minute train ride to the west, Sintra's municipality has invested in more parking lots outside town and youth housing at lower prices near the center, the mayor's office said.

More than 3 million people every year visit the mountains and castles of Sintra, long one of Portugal's wealthiest regions for its cool microclimate and scenery. Sintra City Hall also said via email that fewer tickets are now sold to the nearby historic sites. Pena Palace, for example, began this year to permit less than half the 12,000 tickets per day sold there in the past.

It's not enough, say residents, who have organized into QSintra, an association that's challenging City Hall to "put residents first" with better communication, to start. They also want to know the government's plan for managing guests at a new hotel being constructed to increase the number of overnight stays, and more limits on the number of cars and visitors allowed.

"We're not against tourists," reads the group's manifesto. "We're against the pandemonium that (local leaders) cannot resolve."

## **Ukrainian president says the push into Russia's Kursk region is to create a buffer zone there**

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Sunday the daring military incursion into Russia's Kursk region aims to create a buffer zone to prevent further attacks by Moscow across the border.

It was the first time Zelenskyy clearly stated the aim of the operation that began Aug. 6. Previously, he had said the operation aimed to protect communities in the bordering Sumy region from constant shelling.

Zelenskyy said "it is now our primary task in defensive operations overall: to destroy as much Russian war potential as possible and conduct maximum counteroffensive actions. This includes creating a buffer zone on the aggressor's territory — our operation in the Kursk region," he said in his nightly address.

This weekend, Ukraine destroyed a key bridge in the region and struck a second one nearby, disrupting supply lines as it pressed the incursion, officials said.

Pro-Kremlin military bloggers acknowledged the destruction of the first bridge on the Seim River near the town of Glushkovo will impede deliveries of supplies to Russian forces repelling Ukraine's incursion, although Moscow could still use pontoons and smaller bridges. Ukraine's air force chief, Lt. Gen. Mykola Oleshchuk, on Friday released a video of an airstrike that cut the bridge in two.

Less than two days later, Ukrainian troops hit a second bridge in Russia, according to Oleshchuk and Russian regional Gov. Alexei Smirnov.

As of Sunday morning, there were no officials giving the exact location of the second bridge attack. But Russian Telegram channels claimed that a second bridge over the Seim, in the village of Zvanoe, had been struck.

According to Russia's Mash news site, the attacks left only one intact bridge in the area. The Associated Press could not immediately verify these claims. If confirmed, the Ukrainian strikes would further complicate Moscow's attempts to replenish its forces and evacuate civilians.

Glushkovo is about 12 kilometers (7.5 miles) north of the Ukrainian border, and approximately 16 kilometers (10 miles) northwest of the main battle zone in Kursk. Zvanoe is located another 8 kilometers (5 miles) to the northwest.



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Kyiv previously has said little about the goals of its push into Russia with tanks and other armored vehicles, the largest attack on the country since World War II, which took the Kremlin by surprise and saw scores of villages and hundreds of prisoners fall into Ukrainian hands.

The Ukrainians drove deep into the region in several directions, facing little resistance and sowing chaos and panic as tens of thousands of civilians fled. Ukraine's Commander in Chief, Gen. Oleksandr Syrskyi, claimed last week that his forces had advanced across 1,000 square kilometers (390 square miles) of the region, although it was not possible to independently verify what Ukrainian forces effectively control.

Buffer zones sought by both sides

In his remarks on creating a buffer zone, Zelenskyy said Ukrainian forces "achieved good and much-needed results."

Analysts say that although Ukraine could try to consolidate its gains inside Russia, it would be risky, given Kyiv's limited resources, because its own supply lines extending deep into Kursk would be vulnerable.

The incursion has proven Ukraine's ability to seize the initiative and has boosted its morale, which was sapped by a failed counteroffensive last summer and months of grinding Russian gains in the eastern Donbas region.

For his part, Russian President Vladimir Putin said while visiting China in May that Moscow's offensive that month in Ukraine's northeastern Kharkiv region was aimed at creating a buffer zone there.

That offensive opened a new front and displaced thousands of Ukrainians. The attacks were a response to Ukrainian shelling of Russia's Belgorod region, Putin said.

"I have said publicly that if it continues, we will be forced to create a security zone, a sanitary zone," he said. "That's what we are doing."

Ukraine's move into Kursk resembled its lightning operation from September 2022, led by Syrskyi, in which its forces reclaimed control of the northeastern Kharkiv region after taking advantage of Russian manpower shortages and a lack of field fortifications.

Zelenskyy seeks permission to strike deeper into Russia

On Saturday, Zelenskyy urged Kyiv's allies to lift remaining restrictions on using Western weapons to attack targets deeper in Russia, including in Kursk, saying his troops could deprive Moscow "of any ability to advance and cause destruction" if granted sufficient long-range capabilities.

"It is crucial that our partners remove barriers that hinder us from weakening Russian positions in the way this war demands. ... The bravery of our soldiers and the resilience of our combat brigades compensate for the lack of essential decisions from our partners," Zelenskyy said on the social platform X.

Russia's Foreign Ministry and pro-Kremlin bloggers alleged U.S.-made HIMARS launchers have been used to destroy bridges on the Seim. These claims could not be independently verified.

Ukraine's leaders have repeatedly sought authorization for long-range strikes on Russian air bases and other infrastructure used to pummel Ukraine's energy facilities and other civilian targets, including with retrofitted Soviet-era "glide bombs" attacking Ukraine's industrial east in recent months.

Moscow also appears to have increased attacks on Kyiv, targeting it Sunday with ballistic missiles for a third time this month, according to the head of the municipal military administration. Serhii Popko said in a Telegram post the "almost identical" August strikes on the capital "most likely used" North Korean-supplied KN-23 missiles.

Another attempt to target Kyiv followed at about 7 a.m. Popko said, this time with Iskander cruise missiles. Ukrainian air defenses struck down all the missiles fired in both attacks on the city, he said.

Fears mount for Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant

Elsewhere, the head of the U.N. nuclear watchdog agency said Saturday the safety situation at the Russian-occupied Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant is deteriorating.

International Atomic Energy Agency head Rafael Grossi urged "maximum restraint from all sides" after an IAEA team at the plant reported an explosive carried by a drone detonated just outside its protected area.

According to Grossi, the impact was "close to the essential water sprinkle ponds" and about 100 meters (100 yards) from the only power line supplying the plant. The IAEA team at the plant has reported intense military activity in the surrounding area in the past week, it said.

Kyiv and Moscow have traded blame for attacks near the power plant since it was captured by Russian forces early in the 2022 invasion, including a fire at the facility last weekend. Grossi said the blaze had caused "considerable damage," but posed no immediate danger to nuclear safety.

Belarus says it's deploying more troops on Ukraine border

Russian ally Belarus has massed "nearly a third" of its army along its border with Ukraine, according to authoritarian President Alexander Lukashenko.

Lukashenko told Russian state TV that Minsk was responding to the deployment of more than 120,000 Ukrainian troops to the 1,084-kilometer (674 mile) frontier. Belarus' professional army numbers upward of 60,000.

Ukrainian border force spokesman Andrii Demchenko said Sunday it had not observed any sign of a Belarusian buildup.

Lukashenko, in power for three decades, has relied on Russian support to suppress the biggest protests in Belarus' post-Soviet history after his 2020 reelection, widely seen as a sham both at home and abroad. He allowed Russian troops to use Belarus' territory to invade Ukraine and let Moscow deploy some tactical nuclear weapons on its soil.

## **Former Saudi official alleges Prince Mohammed forged king's signature on Yemen war decree, BBC says**

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — A former Saudi official alleged in a report that Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman forged the signature of his father on the royal decree that launched the kingdom's yearslong, stalemated war against Yemen's Houthi rebels.

Saudi Arabia did not immediately respond to a request for comment over the allegations made without supporting evidence by Saad al-Jabri in an interview published Monday by the BBC, though the kingdom has described him as "a discredited former government official." Al-Jabri, a former Saudi intelligence official who lives in exile in Canada, has been a yearslong dispute with the kingdom as his two children have been imprisoned in case he describes as trying to lure him back to Saudi Arabia.

The allegation comes as Prince Mohammed now serves as the de facto leader of Saudi Arabia, often meeting leaders in place of his father, the 88-year-old King Salman. His assertive behavior, particularly at the start of his ascension to power around the beginning of the Yemen war in 2015, extended to a wider crackdown on any perceived dissent or power base that could challenge his rule.

In al-Jabri's remarks to the BBC, he said a "credible, reliable" official linked to the Saudi Interior Ministry confirmed to him that Prince Mohammed signed the royal decree declaring war in place of his father.

"We were surprised that there was a royal decree to allow the ground interventions," al-Jabri told the BBC. "He forged the signature of his dad for that royal decree. The king's mental capacity was deteriorating."

A U.S.-based lawyer for al-Jabri did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The Yemen war against the Iranian-backed Houthi rebels, launched with promises by the prince it would quickly be over, has ground on for nearly a decade. The war has killed more than 150,000 people and created one of the world's worst humanitarian disasters, killing tens of thousands more. Prince Mohammed was the defense minister at the time.

The Houthis also since the start the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip have launched attacks on shipping that have disrupted traffic through the Red Sea — and led to the most intense combat faced by the U.S. Navy since World War II.

Al-Jabri once worked for former Crown Prince Mohammed bin Nayef, a trusted confidant of the U.S. in the battle against al-Qaida militants in the kingdom after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. King Salman replaced the crown prince for his son in 2017 and Prince Mohammed bin Nayef is believed to have been held under house arrest after.

Al-Jabri had sued Prince Mohammed bin Salman in U.S. federal court, alleging the crown prince sought

to have him killed after he fled abroad.

Speaking to the BBC, al-Jabri again alleged Prince Mohammed considered assassinating former King Abdullah with a poison ring from Russia — something he claimed in a 2021 interview with CBS News. He also described his fears that the crown prince still wanted him killed as his children remain imprisoned in the kingdom.

“He planned for my assassination,” al-Jabri told the BBC. “He will not rest until he sees me dead. I have no doubt about that.”

## What is the latest on the high-stakes negotiations over a cease-fire in Gaza?

By JOSEPH KRAUSS Associated Press

U.S. and Arab mediators say they are closing in on a deal to halt the war in Gaza and free hostages captured by Hamas in its Oct. 7 attack, but the talks have dragged on for months, with several moments of false hope.

The negotiations gained new urgency when Iran and Lebanon’s Hezbollah vowed to avenge the targeted killing of two top militants, attributed to Israel, raising fears of a far wider and more devastating war.

U.S. officials expressed cautious optimism after two days of talks in Qatar last week, in which the mediators put forth a bridging proposal. But Hamas said it had serious problems with it, saying it departs from previous iterations that it had largely accepted. Israel also expressed concerns, saying there were compromises it was unwilling to make.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken is back in the region and set to meet with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Monday. Israel sent a delegation to Cairo on Sunday, and the mediators are expected to hold another round of high-level talks with Israel in Egypt later this week.

Here’s where things stand:

What’s at stake in the cease-fire negotiations?

A cease-fire would halt the deadliest war ever fought between Israelis and Palestinians, a conflict that has destabilized the Middle East and sparked worldwide protests.

Israel’s offensive has killed over 40,000 Palestinians in Gaza, according to local health officials, who do not say how many were militants. The vast majority of the population has been displaced, often multiple times. Hundreds of thousands of people are packed into squalid tent camps, the health sector has largely collapsed and entire neighborhoods have been obliterated.

The Hamas-led attack on Oct. 7 killed some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and saw militants abduct around 250 hostages. Some 110 hostages are still in Gaza, with Israeli authorities saying around a third are dead. Over 100 hostages were released during a weeklong cease-fire in November.

Lebanon’s Hezbollah has launched drones and rockets into Israel on a near-daily basis since the start of the war, and Israel has responded with airstrikes and artillery. The violence has escalated, forcing tens of thousands of people to flee their homes on both sides of the border.

Hezbollah has vowed an even more severe attack — without saying when or how — in response to the killing last month of Fouad Shukur, one of its top commanders, in an Israeli airstrike in Beirut.

Other Iran-backed groups in Syria, Iraq and Yemen have attacked Israeli, U.S. and international targets in solidarity with the Palestinians. Iran and Israel traded fire directly in April, and many fear a repeat if Iran makes good on its threat to avenge the killing of top Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in an explosion in Tehran that was blamed on Israel.

Hezbollah has said it would halt its operations along the border if there is calm in Gaza. A cease-fire deal might also persuade both Hezbollah and Iran to refrain from retaliatory strikes on Israel — if only temporarily — to avoid being seen as spoilers.

What are the main sticking points?

The two sides have been working off an evolving proposal for a three-phase process in which Hamas would free all the hostages in exchange for the release of Palestinian prisoners, an Israeli withdrawal from

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Gaza and a lasting cease-fire.

President Joe Biden came out in favor of the proposal in a May 31 speech and the U.N. Security Council approved it shortly thereafter. But since then, Hamas has proposed "amendments" and Israel has asked for "clarifications," with each side accusing the other of making new demands it cannot accept.

Hamas wants assurances that Israel will not resume the war after the first batch of hostages — around 30 of the most vulnerable — are released. Israel wants to ensure negotiations do not drag on indefinitely over the second phase, in which the remaining living hostages, including male soldiers, are to be freed.

Netanyahu has also demanded in recent weeks that Israel maintain a military presence along the Gaza-Egypt border to prevent arms smuggling and along a line bisecting the territory so it can search Palestinians returning to their homes in the north and make sure militants don't slip in.

Israel denies the demands are new, but there was no reference to either in Biden's speech or the U.N. resolution, which spoke of a full withdrawal. Other lingering issues include which Palestinian prisoners will be released and whether they will be sent into exile.

Who decides whether there is a cease-fire?

Any deal would have to be accepted by Netanyahu and Yahya Sinwar, who helped mastermind the Oct. 7 attack and became Hamas' overall leader after Haniyeh was killed.

Netanyahu faces intense pressure from families of the hostages and much of the Israeli public to make a deal to bring them home. But far-right leaders in his coalition have threatened to bring down the government if he concedes too much, forcing early elections that could drive him from power.

Sinwar, meanwhile, is hiding in Gaza, likely deep inside Hamas' vast network of tunnels, and has stuck to a hard line throughout the talks. He also tops Israel's most-wanted list, raising questions about what happens if he is killed.

In the past it has taken several days for Hamas' negotiators to send proposals to Sinwar and receive his feedback. That means that even when the work of hammering out the latest proposal is completed, it would likely take a week or more for Hamas to formally respond to it.

Palestinians in Gaza say they are exhausted and desperate for a cease-fire. When Hamas accepted an earlier proposal in May, spontaneous celebrations erupted — but those hopes were soon dashed.

Aid groups have called for a cease-fire since the start of the war, saying it's the only way to ensure desperately needed food and humanitarian aid reaches Gaza. Experts have warned of famine and the outbreak of diseases like polio if the war drags on. Even if the fighting ends tomorrow, the U.N. has said it would take more than a decade and tens of billions of dollars to rebuild Gaza.

In Israel, where many are still deeply traumatized by the Oct. 7 attack, there is widespread support for the war and little sympathy for the Palestinians.

But the plight of the hostages has galvanized mass protests calling for a deal to bring them home and for the end of Netanyahu's government, which many blame for the security and intelligence failures that allowed the attack to happen.

## **Ernesto regains hurricane strength, sends powerful swells, dangerous rip currents to US East Coast**

By RON TODT Associated Press

Tropical Storm Ernesto became a hurricane again Sunday as it churned away from Bermuda and headed further out in the northeastern Atlantic, sending powerful swells toward the U.S. East Coast, generating rip currents associated with at least one death and prompting many rescues.

The National Hurricane Center in Miami said Ernesto's maximum sustained winds were 75 mph (120 kph), just barely Category 1 strength.

More strengthening was forecast before Ernesto weakens and becomes a post-tropical cyclone on Tuesday, the hurricane center said. The storm was centered about 520 miles (840 kilometers) south of Halifax, Nova Scotia, and was expected to pass near southeastern Newfoundland late Monday and early Tuesday.

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Swells generated by Ernesto were affecting portions of the Bahamas, Bermuda, the U.S. East Coast as well as the Canadian Atlantic coast. Life-threatening surf and rip current conditions are likely in these areas during the next couple of days, the hurricane center said.

The National Weather Service posted a coastal flood advisory and warned of a high risk for rip currents along the Atlantic Coast through Monday evening, saying they "can sweep even the best swimmers away from shore into deeper water."

A warning extended from Florida to the Boston area and portions of Maine.

In periods of high risk, rip currents become more likely and potentially more frequent, posing a danger to all levels of swimmers, not just inexperienced ones, said meteorologist Mike Lee in Mount Holly, New Jersey.

"It's going to be really dangerous out in the water today," he said.

At Manasquan Inlet in New Jersey, officials said a fisherman was washed off the north jetty Saturday but was quickly rescued by lifeguards. The victim had knee and back injuries and a possible concussion and was taken to a hospital, Lifeguard Chief Doug Anderson told NJ Advance Media, and lifeguards rescued at least five other people.

In Ventnor to the south, Senior Lt. Meghan Holland of the city beach patrol said eight people were rescued.

Forecasters, citing local emergency management, said a 41-year-old man drowned Saturday in a rip current at Surf City, North Carolina.

Two men drowned Friday in separate incidents on Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, but it was unclear whether rip currents were involved, The Island Packet of Hilton Head reported, citing a lifeguard services spokesperson.

Separately, heavy rains unrelated to the hurricane caused flooding in parts of western Connecticut Sunday, closing roads, forcing water rescues and causing a minor mudslide. Floodwaters swept two people into the Little River in the town of Oxford, CT Insider reported, but officials weren't able to immediately reach the area because of high waters and had to respond to other emergency calls, said Scott Pelletier, Oxford's fire chief. Pelletier did not respond to a message from The Associated Press seeking additional details.

Videos posted on Facebook showed severe flooding in Oxford overtaking roads and homes, with at least one video showing a small building being washed downstream.

In Southbury, police asked residents via Facebook to stay home while roads were closed and crews responded to emergencies. In nearby Danbury, city officials said in a statement that a mudslide prompted the evacuation of a home.

Flash flood warnings were posted for parts of Connecticut and southeastern New York, and flash flood watches and advisories were in effect for areas of Delaware, New Jersey and southeastern Pennsylvania.

A flash flood emergency was issued to parts of northwestern Suffolk County including Brentwood, West Babylon and Coram until 4:30 a.m.

The rough surf spawned by Hurricane Ernesto contributed to an unoccupied beach house along the Cape Hatteras National Seashore on North Carolina's Outer Banks collapsing into the water Friday evening. Seashore officials urged the public Sunday to avoid beaches in parts of the village of Rodanthe where "substantial damage" to several oceanfront structures occurred. Debris cleanup was expected over the next several days.

On New York's Long Island, East Hampton Village Mayor Jerry Larsen said beaches were closed to swimmers on Saturday and Sunday because high tides pushed water right up to the base of the dunes "so you can't really have people sitting on the beach."

Many people watched the water from the parking lot Sunday, he added.

"It's quite a sight to see the water coming up almost to the parking lot, and if you think about it that storm was hundreds of miles offshore so it must have been quite powerful," Larsen said.

The annual fireworks show that draws thousands was canceled Saturday night and again for Sunday night, he said.

Ernesto had weakened to a tropical storm late Saturday after bringing heavy rain and strong winds to Bermuda.

At a press conference Sunday afternoon, Bermuda Security Minister Michael Weeks said the tiny British territory made it through the hurricane without any injuries or major incidents. "I want to express my gratitude to everyone for taking this storm seriously," he said.

Steady progress is being made to clear the roads and restore power in Bermuda, he added. Businesses were beginning to reopen and airport operations were to resume Sunday.

There were no reports of major damage, said Lyndon Raynor of Bermuda's Disaster Risk Reduction Mitigation Team. BELCO, Bermuda's power company, said more than 70% of customers had electricity and more than 7,000 remained without it Sunday.

Ernesto previously battered the northeastern Caribbean, leaving tens of thousands of people without water in Puerto Rico. The national power company LUMA said it had restored electricity to more than 1.4 million customers, but service data Sunday showed more than 61,000 without power.

After cleaning up and removing debris, the Virgin Islands Department of Education said all public schools would resume operations Monday. Public school classes also were slated to start Monday in Puerto Rico, nearly a week after the original opening date.

## **Blinken, in Israel, says now is 'maybe the last' chance for a Gaza cease-fire deal**

By MATTHEW LEE AP Diplomatic Writer

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Monday the time is now to conclude a Gaza cease-fire agreement that would return hostages held by Hamas and bring relief to Palestinian suffering after 10 months of devastating fighting in Gaza.

Blinken's ninth urgent mission to the Middle East since the conflict began came days after mediators, including the United States, expressed renewed optimism a deal was near. But Hamas has expressed deep dissatisfaction with the latest proposal and Israel has said there were areas it was unwilling to compromise.

The trip, days ahead of new talks expected this week in Egypt, comes amid fears the conflict could widen into a deeper regional war following the killings of top militant commanders in Lebanon that Iran blamed on Israel.

"This is a decisive moment, probably the best, maybe the last, opportunity to get the hostages home, to get a cease-fire and to put everyone on a better path to enduring peace and security," Blinken said as he opened talks with Israeli President Isaac Herzog in Tel Aviv.

"It's also time to make sure that no one takes any steps that could derail this process," he said in a veiled reference to Iran. "And so we're working to make sure that there is no escalation, that there are no provocations, that there are no actions that in any way move us away from getting this deal over the line, or for that matter, escalating the conflict to other places and to greater intensity."

Herzog thanked Blinken for the Biden administration's support for Israel and lamented a spate of recent attacks against Israelis in the past 24 hours.

"This is the way we are living these days," Herzog said. "We are surrounded by terrorism from all four corners of the earth and we are fighting back as a resilient and strong nation."

Mediators are to meet again this week in Cairo to try to cement a cease-fire. Blinken will travel to Egypt on Tuesday after he wraps up his Israel stop in meetings with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Yoav Gallant later Monday.

The war began Oct. 7 when Hamas-led militants broke into Israel, killing some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducting around 250. Of those, some 110 are still believed to be in Gaza, though Israeli authorities say around a third are dead. More than 100 hostages were released in November during a weeklong cease-fire.

Israel's counterattack in Gaza has killed over 40,000 Palestinians, according to local health authorities, and devastated much of the territory.

Late last week, the three countries mediating the proposed cease-fire — Egypt, Qatar and the U.S. —

reported progress on a deal under which Israel would halt most military operations in Gaza and release a number of Palestinian prisoners in exchange for the release of hostages.

Shortly before Blinken arrived in Tel Aviv on Sunday, Netanyahu told a Cabinet meeting there are areas where Israel can be flexible and unspecified areas where it won't be. "We are conducting negotiations and not a scenario in which we just give and give," he said.

The evolving proposal calls for a three-phase process in which Hamas would release all hostages abducted during its Oct. 7 attack. In exchange, Israel would withdraw its forces from Gaza and release Palestinian prisoners.

Hamas accuses Israel of adding new demands that it maintain a military presence along the Gaza-Egypt border to prevent arms smuggling and along a line bisecting the territory so it can search Palestinians returning to their homes in the north. Israel said those were not new demands, but clarifications of a previous proposal.

Officials said the U.S. has presented proposals to bridge all the gaps remaining between the Israeli and Hamas positions. Formal responses to the U.S. outline are expected this week and could lead to a cease-fire declaration unless the talks collapse, as has happened with multiple previous efforts.

Late Sunday, Hamas said in a statement that Netanyahu has continued to set obstacles to a deal by demanding new conditions, accusing him of wanting to prolong the war. It said the mediators' latest offer was a capitulation to Israel.

"The new proposal responds to Netanyahu's conditions," Hamas said.

Blinken said Monday both sides should take this opportunity to reach a deal.

"It is time for everyone to get to yes and to not look for any excuses to say no," he said.

An Israeli delegation held talks with Egyptian officials as part of the truce efforts, an Egyptian official said Monday.

The hourslong meeting Sunday focused on the Philadelphi corridor along the Gaza-Egypt border but didn't achieve a breakthrough, according to the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the ongoing negotiations.

The official said Israel still insists on keeping control of the border and the east-west route that bisects Gaza. He said the delegation didn't offer anything new in their meeting.

## **Protesters plan large marches and rallies as Democratic National Convention kicks off in Chicago**

By SOPHIA TAREEN Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — Crowds of activists are expected to gather in Chicago for protests outside the Democratic National Convention this week, hoping to call attention to such issues as economic injustice, reproductive rights and the war in Gaza.

While Vice President Kamala Harris has galvanized the party as she gears up to accept the Democratic nomination, activists say their plans to demonstrate haven't changed. They're ready to amplify their progressive message before the nation's top Democratic leaders.

Their issues cover climate change, abortion rights and racial equality, to name a few, but many activists agree an immediate cease-fire in the Israel-Hamas war is the overarching message of the demonstrations. They've likened it to the Vietnam War of their generation. The Chicago area has one of the largest Palestinian communities in the nation and buses are bringing activists to Chicago from all over the country. Organizers estimate turnout for Monday's march and rally, on the first day of the convention, to be at least 20,000 people.

"We have to play our part in the belly of the beast to stop the genocide, to end U.S. aid to Israel and stand with Palestine," said Hatem Abudayyeh, a spokesperson for the Coalition to March on the DNC.

The coalition is made up of hundreds of organizations, including students. Activists say they learned lessons from last month's Republican National Convention in Milwaukee. They expect bigger crowds and

more robust demonstrations through the week.

The first protest on Sunday night brought together those calling for abortion and LGBTQ+ rights and an end to the war in Gaza. The march lasted for hours, along a route lined by police, and showed no signs of major conflicts.

Illinois Gov. JB Pritzker, who was under consideration as Harris' running mate, said peaceful protests were welcome.

"There are a lot of people who are inside the hall who will believe in some of those messages and carry that with them," Pritzker told The Associated Press in a recent interview. "But importantly, the Democratic Party doesn't shut people out and disallow them from expressing their First Amendment rights."

But some have lingering safety concerns, worried that protests could become unpredictable or devolve into chaos.

Chicago, which has hosted more political conventions than any other U.S. city, has been unable to escape comparisons to the infamous 1968 convention where police and anti-Vietnam War protesters violently clashed on live television.

Some businesses boarded up their windows as a precaution and county courts said they would open more space in case of mass arrests. Chicago police say officers have undergone extensive training on constitutional policing and de-escalation tactics.

Coalition activists and the city have been at odds over the location of the protests and other logistics. A judge sided with the city over an approximately 1-mile (1.6-kilometer) march route, which organizers argue isn't big enough for the expected crowds. Abudayyeh said the coalition would continue to push for a much longer route until the march started on Monday.

Also Monday, the Philadelphia-based Poor People's Army, which advocates for economic justice, plans to set up at Humboldt Park on the northwest side of Chicago and will feature events with third-party candidates Jill Stein and Cornel West, plus a 3-mile (5-kilometer) march.

Aside from the protests the city is also hosting a speakers' stage at a park outside the convention center with 45-minute time slots. Most of the organizations who've signed up have the same progressive agenda as the coalition, but the list also includes the Israeli American Council and the conservative-leaning Illinois Policy Institute. A local firefighters union is also hoping to call attention to their contract fight with the city.

"The First Amendment is fundamental to our democracy," Chicago Mayor Brandon Johnson, a former union organizer, told the AP in an interview last week. "I'll do everything in my power to protect the right to assemble in protest."

## **Biden's journey: After getting knocked down, he keeps getting back up.**

By JOSH BOAK Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — Sixteen years ago, a triumphant Joe Biden addressed an adoring crowd at the Democratic National Convention in Denver, his smile radiating confidence about the country's future and his own journey.

The soon-to-be vice president hugged his son Beau. He spoke about how his own parents had endowed him with a sense of grit and tenacity.

"Champ, when you get knocked down, get up," he recalled his father, Joe, saying. Biden then repeated the lesson taught to him by his mother, Catherine Eugenia Finnegan Biden, who was seated in the audience: "Failure at some point in your life is inevitable, but giving up is unforgivable."

In 2024, Biden was not forced to reconcile a failure of his presidency. He compiled a list of significant accomplishments that will be felt for years. But he chose to give up his campaign under pressure from Democratic leaders, in a remarkable concession to the passage of time, when allies in his party and a clear majority of U.S. adults concluded the 81-year-old should not seek reelection. After Biden's decision to leave the presidential race, his party not only forgave him, its leaders praised him.

So Joseph Robinette Biden Jr. comes to the Democratic National Convention in Chicago this week both



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revered and resigned.

Biden had consolidated his party's support and did not have a serious competitor. But that support crumbled after a disastrous debate in June when his frailties were on unsparing public display, reinforcing his greatest liability — that at his age he might no longer be up for the job.

In Chicago, Biden has decided to get back up and show the difference between stepping aside and quitting. His vice president, Kamala Harris, is now in the spotlight as the nominee. For the president, it's the latest in a life marked by the cycles of loss and recovery.

"He has had wonderful things happen to him and he has had terrible things happen to him," said Ted Kaufman, his friend, former aide and appointed successor in the Senate from Delaware.

This story is based on interviews with aides, colleagues and those who have worked with Biden over a half-century career in politics.

Biden arrived at the White House with a hope that a focus on the public good could help heal the partisan malice that emerged with the ascent of former President Donald Trump, now again the Republican nominee.

No one denied the ego necessary to pursue the White House. But those interviewed stressed that Biden sees his legacy more as a leader who could demonstrate during a cynical era that government was a force for good.

"It's less about him," said Stefanie Feldman, an assistant to the president and the White House staff secretary. "He wants people to understand that the federal government is delivering results."

Biden deployed his decades in the Senate to forge a bipartisan infrastructure deal. He signed into law far-reaching investments in advanced technologies and brokered a debt deal with Republicans to avoid a catastrophic default. Biden last week stressed that he was reducing prices on 10 of Medicare's costliest prescription drugs.

He also helped to restore the faith of longtime allies that the United States could be an unflinching partner, and led the effort to provide much needed backing for Ukraine's war against a Russian invasion and to counter China's rise.

He dealt with a pandemic, inflation, immigration challenges, a broken supply chain and a troubled withdrawal from Afghanistan.

"The experience he brought to the job — there's no question — gave him the ability to achieve things that no one thought he could achieve," said Anita Dunn, who worked as a senior adviser. "It's not just experience though. It's relationships. It's understanding how Congress works and how members of Congress can be brought along to get things done."

But Americans consistently saw not the accrued wisdom, but the stiff-legged, shuffling steps and the verbal struggles.

Born too early to qualify as a Baby Boomer, the arc of Biden's political career has been full of remarkable successes and staggering defeats. He was elected to the Senate from Delaware at 29, only to lose his wife and daughter in a car crash. He found a new partner in Jill and sought the presidency in the 1988 cycle, only to withdraw after reports of plagiarism. Then he dealt with serious health issues, surviving two brain aneurysms.

His 2008 presidential campaign was a washout, but he became President Barack Obama's trusted No. 2. Then Beau died of brain cancer and his other son, Hunter, succumbed to drug addiction. Against long odds, Biden won the Democratic nomination in 2020 and then beat Trump, only to have his party want someone else to run against his predecessor this year.

Aides have recalled Biden being told years before that China's economic growth would be a positive because it would lower prices for consumers, even if it meant that more manufacturing would move overseas. "If it helps the consumer and hurts the worker, we have a problem," Biden told them at the time.

Biden was so focused on middle-class jobs that he found his presidency, ironically, defined by the public's desire for lower prices. Inflation was a symptom of global disruptions caused by the pandemic and war, as well as government spending meant to stabilize the economy for workers that helped spur a historic burst of hiring.

The tough logic is that Biden anchored his presidency with an eye toward what America could be like a decade from now.

Even as he personally believed he could beat Trump, the potential defeat carried the risk that his tax breaks meant to shift the country away from fossil fuels and toward renewable energy and electric vehicles could go away.

A loss would mean the possibility of deeper tax cuts for the wealthy and corporations. A Trump return to the White House could mean the unraveling of the alliances that Biden had rebuilt.

Even as Biden had come out of political retirement in 2020 because he saw Trump's movement as a threat to democracy, the former president remained a defining presence in American politics. Trump had engendered a deep loyalty from many voters, who made their objections to Biden visible with protests he could see from the presidential limousine.

"It may be that this is the biggest piece of unfinished business of his administration," Dunn said. "He has raised the issues so that they are a concern for voters, which is at the end of the day how democracies deal with them."

Biden had told voters he needed a second term to "finish the job." But the work of a president is never truly finished, a lesson that's clear from some of the portraits of other presidents that Biden displayed in the Oval Office.

George Washington served two terms, leaving a country in its infancy that was full of potential and peril. Abraham Lincoln was assassinated before he could win the peace after the Civil War's end. Franklin D. Roosevelt never lived to see victory declared in World War II.

Unlike Lyndon Johnson in 1968, Biden's second-term hopes were not undone by an unpopular war and violence in American streets. Unlike Harry Truman in 1952, he was not felled by a primary challenge.

But in retirement, Biden just might have another burst of luck to watch the future that his four years as president helped to create.

## 50 years on, Harlem Week shows how a New York City neighborhood went from crisis to renaissance

By RYAN DOAN-NGUYEN Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — In 1974, Harlem's deserted streets and tumbledown tenements told the story of a neighborhood left behind. Decades of disinvestment had culminated in a mass exodus known as urban flight and residents watched as their wealthier, more educated counterparts left the New York City neighborhood in droves.

But the tide turned when Percy Sutton, then the Manhattan borough president and New York City's highest-ranking Black elected official, launched a campaign to bring back vitality to the historically African American neighborhood that had been known as a global Black mecca of arts, culture and entrepreneurship.

It became known as Harlem Week, and would go on to draw back those who had departed. On Sunday, organizers celebrated Harlem Week's 50th anniversary after 18 days of free programming that showcased all the iconic neighborhood has to offer.

Harlem Week stands as "the constant line through the last 50 years of America's most historic Black neighborhood," said the Rev. Al Sharpton, whose National Action Network is headquartered in the neighborhood. "The dream of Percy Sutton and his peers in government, arts, the church and other elements of Harlem lives on, stronger than ever."

In the 1970s, Harlem demanded more than an ordinary festival, if it wanted a resurrection. Those who remained in Harlem during urban flight — mostly low-income, Black families — would turn on their televisions to constant despair: crime reports, bleak statistics and reporters who called their home a "sinking ship."

Sutton knew Harlem was due for a revitalizing, uplifting moment.

That summer, Sutton rallied religious, political, civic and artistic leaders that included Tito Puente, Max Roach, Maya Angelou, James Baldwin, Harry Belafonte, Sidney Poitier, Ruby Dee and Lloyd Williams. Together, they devised an event that would pivot the spotlight from Harlem's troubles to its vibrant legacy:

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Harlem Day.

Radio disc jockeys Hal Jackson and Frankie Crocker produced a concert at the plaza of the Harlem State Office Building, while actor Ossie Davis cut a ribbon at 138th street and 7th Avenue, announcing the start of the "Second Harlem Renaissance."

The ribbon-cutting ceremony renamed 7th Avenue to Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Boulevard, named for the first African American elected to Congress from New York, marking the first time a New York City street took the name of a person of color.

"About two or three weeks later, Percy Sutton called us all and said it was such a successful day," said Lloyd Williams, one of Harlem Day's co-founders and the current president of the Greater Harlem Chamber of Commerce. "It meant so much to the other cities that were being deserted in Detroit and Baltimore, Washington and Chicago, that they asked if we would do it again on an annual basis."

They did, and Harlem Day evolved into Harlem Weekend and eventually Harlem Week, which, before the pandemic, expanded to a full month of programming.

"Only in Harlem could a week be more than seven days," said Williams, whose family has lived in Harlem since 1919.

This year's celebration featured entertainment, including a headlining set by hip-hop artist Fabolous, a tribute to Harry Belafonte and Broadway performances. Other concerts showcased jazz, reggae, R&B and gospel traditions nurtured in Harlem, alongside hundreds of food and merchandise vendors.

Organizers also included empowerment initiatives, such as financial literacy workshops and health screenings, at Harlem Health Village and the Children's Festival. Every child who attended received a back-to-school backpack.

Harlem Week always has been a living tribute to Harlem's history of greats, such as W.E.B. Du Bois, Langston Hughes, Augusta Savage and Aaron Douglas. It recognizes the Harlem Renaissance and Black Arts Movement and honors landmarks like the Apollo Theater and Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture.

Many historians consider the late 1960s and the 1970s to be Harlem's darkest years.

The area had been battered by unrest, including a 1964 riot that killed an unarmed Black teenager, Malcolm X's assassination in 1965 and the turmoil after the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination in 1968. Household incomes fell dramatically and infant mortality rates were high.

"The neighborhood was blighted," recalled Malik Yoba, an actor born in the Bronx in 1967 who grew up in Harlem and spent days playing in the dirt of vacant lots. Yoba attended school in the Upper East Side with peers who had country homes upstate in the Hamptons.

"I didn't understand why where we lived looked so dramatically different than where they lived," he said. "I knew something was wrong."

But Harlemites are creatives and entrepreneurs, visionaries and leaders. Where others saw decline, they saw opportunity, and the determination to match Harlem with its potential ran high.

Yoba, now 56, built a career as an actor showcasing Harlem to audiences across the nation. His experiences with housing inequality also fueled his passion for real estate.

Yoba combats the effects of redlining through his company Yoba Development, which provides young people of color access to the industry and has active projects in Baltimore and New York City.

"When you grow up in disenfranchised and divested communities, you can't see the forest through the trees," Yoba said. "You can grow up believing that walking by burnt-down buildings is your birthright, as opposed to understanding that building is a business."

Hazel Dukes, 92, a prominent New York civil rights activist and Harlem resident of 30 years, has spent her life fighting discrimination in housing and education. She lived in the same Harlem building as Sutton and organized alongside him, later becoming a national president of the NAACP in 1989.

"I know what it feels to be denied," said Dukes, who was born and raised in Montgomery, Alabama, and endured Jim Crow segregation. She moved to New York City with her parents in the 1950s.

Today, property in Harlem is coveted, driven by gentrification and its enduring cultural appeal.

"There was a waiting list, because everybody wanted to live in Harlem," Dukes said. "People want to

come to Harlem before they transition from this world.”

## Trump will campaign across the country this week as he struggles to adjust to Harris

By JILL COLVIN Associated Press

BEDMINSTER, N.J. (AP) — As Democrats kick off their convention in Chicago, Donald Trump’s campaign is trying to regain its footing after weeks of struggling to adjust to Vice President Kamala Harris at the top of the opposing ticket.

Trump will attempt to undercut the Democratic celebration with a jam-packed schedule that includes daily events in battleground states tied to subjects where Republicans think they hold an advantage. It’s his busiest campaign week since the winter, when he faced challengers in the Republican primary.

But when Trump has held events billed as policy speeches throughout the campaign, they have often resembled his usual, rambling rally remarks. And as has long been the case during his political career, Trump has undercut his own message with outbursts and attacks that drown out anything else.

The former president and Republican nominee has appeared at times in denial about the reality that Harris, and not President Joe Biden, is now his rival. He’s launched deeply personal attacks, lied about her crowds by claiming images of them were generated by AI, and played on racist tropes by questioning her racial identity as she runs to become the country’s first Black female and first South Asian president.

The outbursts have alarmed allies, who worry Trump is damaging his chance in what they believe is an eminently winnable race. Privately and publicly, they have urged him to focus on policy instead of personality, and to do more to broaden his appeal with swing voters as they grow more nervous about Harris’ competitiveness.

“If you have a policy debate for president, he wins,” South Carolina Sen. Lindsey Graham said Sunday on NBC’s “Meet the Press.” “Donald Trump the provocateur, the showman, may not win this election.”

Trump is scheduled to appear Monday in Pennsylvania to talk about the economy and energy, Tuesday in Michigan to talk about crime and safety, and Wednesday in North Carolina to talk about national security at a joint appearance with his running mate, Ohio Sen. JD Vance. On Thursday, he’ll travel to the southwest border in Arizona to talk about immigration before going Friday to Arizona and Nevada.

Graham said he wanted Trump to focus on what he would do on the economy and the U.S.-Mexico border, arguing, “Policy is the key to the White House.” Some people at his rallies agreed with that advice.

“He needs to quit talking about Biden other than Harris piggybacking on those policies,” said Kory Jenó, a 53-year-old from Swannanoa, North Carolina, who was waiting to see Trump speak last week in nearby Asheville. “He needs to keep the conversation on the issues and what he’s doing to do for Americans instead of running off on tangents where he’s just bashing her and that sort of thing.”

An economy news conference ends with talk of injured veterans

The challenge for Republicans was on display last Thursday, when Trump invited reporters to his golf course in Bedminster, New Jersey, to talk about the economy. As he stood before an assortment of grocery store items, Trump largely stuck to his intended message during the first half-hour, talking about rising prices and blaming Biden and Harris for enacting policies he blamed for spiking inflation.

He was unusually diplomatic, including in responding to criticism from former U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley, who said last week Trump should be spending his time working to appeal to suburban women, college-educated voters, independents, moderate Republicans and conservative Democrats instead of his base.

“I want this campaign to win. But the campaign is not going to win talking about crowd sizes. It’s not going to win talking about what race Kamala Harris is. It’s not going to win talking about whether she’s dumb,” Haley said.

But Trump didn’t take Haley’s advice when asked separately whether he needed to run a more disciplined campaign and pivot away from personal attacks against Harris.

“I’m angry at her,” he said. “I think I’m entitled to personal attacks. I don’t have a lot of respect for her. I don’t have a lot of respect for her intelligence and I think she’ll be a terrible president.”

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He then gave Democrats new fodder at an event later that night with Miriam Adelson, the widow of casino magnate Sheldon Adelson, who is expected to spend tens of millions of dollars helping Trump regain the White House. As he described giving her the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian award, he said it was "much better" than the Congressional Medal of Honor, the nation's highest military honor.

"Everyone who gets the Congressional Medal of Honor, that's soldiers, they're either in very bad shape because they've been hit so many times by bullets, or they're dead," Trump told an audience. "She gets it, and she's a healthy, beautiful woman."

The comment was immediately blasted by the Harris campaign and by some veterans as disrespectful to service members, just as Trump and his running mate, Ohio Sen. JD Vance, have tried to raise doubts about the National Guard record of Harris' running mate, Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz.

On Saturday, at a rally in Pennsylvania, Trump repeatedly swerved again from a message focused on the economy to personal attacks against Harris, including a declaration that he is "much better looking" than she is.

His campaign rejects the idea that he is trying to reset

Trump's struggles come after an extraordinary stretch that has completely upended the campaign.

Just one month ago, Republicans gathered at their national convention in Milwaukee were elated about their chances. Trump had just survived an assassination attempt at a Pennsylvania rally and was being hailed by his most ardent supporters as a messiah-like figure saved by God to save the nation.

Biden, his opponent, was facing growing pressure from his party to exit the race after a disastrous debate performance in which he struggled at times to complete sentences. His campaign signaled it would pull back from Sun Belt states like Arizona and Georgia that it had flipped from Trump four years ago.

But just three days after the convention closed, Biden ended his bid and endorsed Harris, who quickly aligned the party behind her. Some polls show Harris performing better than Biden in battleground states like Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin, though most still suggest a tight race.

"We just watched a rocket ship take off with Kamala Harris," Trump campaign pollster Tony Fabrizio said during a briefing with reporters earlier this month, pointing to a wave of media that, for a rare moment, eclipsed the attention Trump generates.

The former president's advisers remain bullish about his chances. They insist that Harris and Democrats are caught up in a fleeting moment of excitement with their new nominee, and are confident voters will sour on the vice president as they learn more about her past comments and positions.

They intend to spend the race's final stretch painting her as a liberal extremist and contrasting the candidates' differing approaches on the economy, crime and immigration.

"President Trump has continued to speak about sky-high inflation that has crushed American families, an out-of-control border that threatens every community, and rampant crime while Kamala Harris continues to hide from the press," said Trump campaign spokesman Steven Cheung, adding that Trump "will be barnstorming battleground states all across the country to prosecute the case against a weak, failed and dangerously liberal Kamala Harris."

In Asheville, North Carolina, where Trump used an event billed as a major economic speech to go on tangents about Harris' laugh and Biden's son Hunter, 75-year-old Mary Ray said Trump "needs to stop the personal attacks."

Asked whether she was referring to Trump's most incendiary comments — calling Harris a "nasty woman" and questioning how she discusses her biracial heritage — Ray furrowed her brow and pursed her lips.

"It hurts him with other voters," Ray said.

## Floor fights, boos and a too-long kiss. How the dramatic and the bizarre define convention history

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

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CHICAGO (AP) — In 1948, the Republican and Democratic parties did something unthinkable in today's climate of ferocious political animosity: They not only held their national conventions in the same city but also shared some of the props.

Both gathered in Philadelphia, largely because its Municipal Auditorium had already been fitted with the wiring needed for then-groundbreaking live convention coverage on national television.

To save money, Democrats asked Republicans to leave the American flags and bunting up to be reused at their event 17 days later. The GOP complied, though some items became faded and worn in the interval.

Like party camaraderie, the more informal way conventions were staged has evaporated. Once bare-knuckled showdowns to hammer out presidential nominees, modern gatherings have evolved into carefully scripted, made-for-TV events meant to showcase party unity.

High political drama is behind the Democrats when their convention opens Monday in Chicago, after President Joe Biden succumbed to mounting pressure from many in his own party and abandoned his reelection bid last month. There is still the potential for protests at the convention, but Democrats have coalesced with surprising speed and new energy around Vice President Kamala Harris at the top of the party's ticket. Republicans displayed similarly strong unity in nominating former President Donald Trump during the GOP convention in Milwaukee last month.

But even with conventions now choreographed down to tiny details, the unexpected can still happen. Here's a look at a few soaring scenes, floor fights, street battles and other memorable convention moments that were uplifting, outlandish or just plain awkward:

## Trump's triumphant return

Trump made a dramatic entrance on the first night of last month's Republican convention, striding into the arena to wild cheers with a bandage over his right ear, just two days after surviving an attempted assassination.

The moment led to speculation that the former president might emerge from the attack changed, ready to embrace a more optimistic outlook and perhaps stop leaning into the political divisions he has thrived on throughout his political career.

During his convention speech three nights later — with his ear still bandaged — the former president seemed to be doing just that, at first. He said early on that he sought to "launch a new era of safety, prosperity and freedom for citizens of every race, religion, color and creed." But, by the end, Trump had returned to predictions of doom and division, warning, "Bad things are going to happen."

## Cruz's non-endorsement

As the last candidate Donald Trump defeated during the 2016 GOP primary, Texas Sen. Ted Cruz amassed enough delegates to address the party's convention in Cleveland — but balked at endorsing his ex-rival.

Still smarting over Trump calling him "Lyin' Ted," mocking his wife's appearance and suggesting the senator's Cuba-born father was involved in the assassination of John F. Kennedy, Cruz implored delegates to "vote your conscience." It drew prolonged boos.

Cruz reversed himself and endorsed Trump that fall, and today he's among his staunchest defenders. But at the time, the vitriol was high enough that Cruz's wife, Heidi, was led from the convention floor, just in case.

## Clint Eastwood's empty chair

A head-scratching moment came in 2012, when Clint Eastwood addressed the Republican gathering in Tampa, Florida, with an empty chair standing in for then-President Barack Obama.

The actor and director spent 12 minutes conversing with the piece of furniture, and even dodging barages of imaginary obscenities from it.

"What do you mean shut up?" Eastwood crowed.

He also joked about then-Vice President Biden's reputation for gaffes — launching criticisms that may have proven prescient, given the questions that arose following his disastrous debate performance in June.

"Of course, we all know Biden is the intellect of the Democratic party," Eastwood told the chair. "Just kind of a grin, with a body behind it."

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## 'Audacity of hope'

The year 2004 was otherwise terrible for Democrats, President George W. Bush won reelection and Republicans retained control of Congress. But one bright spot came from Obama, then a little-known Illinois state senator, electrifying his party's Boston convention.

Obama dubbed himself "a skinny kid with a funny name who believes that America has a place for him, too" and summed up his political philosophy as being built around "the audacity of hope."

## Gore's extra-long kiss

As he stepped onstage to deliver a speech accepting his party's 2000 presidential nomination in Los Angeles, Al Gore embraced his wife, Tipper, and gave her a full-mouthed kiss, hanging on much longer than usual for a display of passion in public.

The crowd cheered, but the kiss eventually encompassed an uncomfortable three seconds of screen time.

Gore had been battling criticisms that he was too stiff during public appearances, which may have explained how hard he leaned in. Regardless, the smooch was remembered more than Gore's speech.

He went on to narrowly lose that November to Bush. A decade later, the Gores separated after 40 years of marriage.

## Women on the ticket

At the Democrats' 1984 convention in San Francisco, presidential nominee Walter Mondale announced Geraldine Ferraro as his running mate, making her the first woman on a major presidential ticket. Ferraro declared, "America is the land where dreams can come true for all of us," though she and Mondale went on to win just 13 electoral votes compared to President Ronald Reagan's 525.

Twenty years later, Sen. John McCain chose Sarah Palin as his vice presidential candidate, and her speech at the Republican convention in St. Paul, Minnesota, was a hit, mixing the then-Alaska governor's compelling personal story with humor and political punch. It gave McCain a boost, but he still lost to Obama.

At the 2016 Democratic convention in Philadelphia, Hillary Clinton became the first major-party female presidential nominee, declaring, "When any barrier falls in America, for anyone, it clears the way for everyone." She eventually lost to Trump.

Kamala Harris was the first woman on a winning ticket, accepting her role as Biden's running mate during a mostly virtual convention last cycle. Now, having replaced Biden as the Democratic nominee, she's seeking to become the nation's first woman to serve as president.

## Opposing the incumbent

In 1976, Reagan, then California's governor, challenged President Gerald Ford from the right and touched off a bitter struggle at the GOP's convention in Kansas City. Ford narrowly prevailed with 1,187 votes to 1,070, but lost that November to Democrat Jimmy Carter.

Four years later, at the Democratic convention in New York, Carter himself faced a floor challenge from Massachusetts Sen. Ted Kennedy, who badly trailed the president in delegates but tried to loosen rules on how they were pledged to vote. Tensions ran high and, though the change was defeated, Carter later lost to Reagan.

## Eagleton's 18-day vice presidential candidacy

The pressure on Biden to leave the race was without modern precedent at the top of a presidential ticket — but not when it comes to a nominee's running mate.

Shortly after the 1972 Democratic convention in Miami, reports surfaced that Democratic presidential nominee George McGovern's vice presidential pick, Missouri Sen. Thomas Eagleton, had previously undergone electroshock therapy to treat depression.

A divided convention had prompted McGovern to tap Eagleton on its final day, after he was turned down by several alternatives. Eagleton therefore didn't receive much vetting of his record, which might have surfaced the medical disclosures earlier.

Eagleton resigned after 18 days on the ticket and was replaced by Sargent Shriver. Incumbent Republican President Richard Nixon went on to win 49 out of 50 states that November.

## Chaos in Chicago

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After President Lyndon B. Johnson opted not to seek reelection and Robert F. Kennedy was assassinated, Vice President Hubert Humphrey secured the 1968 Democratic nomination at the party's convention. But that was only after a raucous floor fight that ended with delegates defeating a peace platform seeking an end to the Vietnam war.

What happened at the convention was overshadowed by thousands of antiwar protesters who marched in the streets. Demonstrators were attacked by police, sparking such turmoil that the tear gas fired reached the 25th floor suite where Humphrey was preparing for his appearance at a hotel five miles from the convention site.

The Democratic convention returns to Chicago this week, and widespread demonstrations are being planned to oppose the Biden administration's support for Israel in its war with Hamas — leaving some to wonder whether a 1968 redux could be coming.

## Democrats open their convention transformed by Harris' ascendance but facing lingering questions

By STEVE PEOPLES, ZEKE MILLER and BILL BARROW Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — A refreshed Democratic Party reintroduces itself to a divided nation this week, having been transformed by the money, momentum, relief and even joy that followed Vice President Kamala Harris' rise to the top of its ticket.

The whiplash of the last month culminates in a convention that begins Monday in Chicago. Above all, the four-day gathering of thousands of activists and party leaders from across the nation is designed to celebrate and strengthen Harris as President Joe Biden's replacement and boost her campaign to defeat Republican Donald Trump in November.

Just beneath the surface, real questions loom about the depth of Harris' newfound support, the breadth of her coalition and the strength of her movement. Not even a month ago, Democrats were deeply divided over foreign policy, political strategy and Biden himself, who was holding on after his disastrous debate by suggesting he had a better chance than any Democrat — including Harris — of beating Trump.

Far from the formality that many modern party conventions have become, this week's event will bring many Americans their first extended look at Harris and her new running mate, Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz. How the Democrats present Harris and Walz will be critical, especially with Trump launching a weeklong effort to cut into their message.

A potential distraction will be thousands of progressive protesters who are expected to descend upon Chicago to decry the Biden-Harris administration's support for Israel's war against Hamas in Gaza. Harris' allies are hopeful that the pro-Palestinian protesters will not overshadow the official program, which features a slate of current and former Democratic stars.

"Democrats are walking into that convention enthused, excited and unified," said one of those stars, Pennsylvania Gov. Josh Shapiro, who was a finalist to be Harris' running mate. "And it's critically important that we prosecute the case against Donald Trump and the chaos that he would bring — and leave that convention even more unified, even more excited, even more enthused for the final 75 or so days of this campaign."

Shapiro said he welcomed protesters during the convention — "provided the protest is peaceful, provided the protest follows the rules of the community."

Biden will get his farewell Monday

Part of introducing Harris and Walz will be first giving a graceful exit to the 81-year-old incumbent president, who is slated to deliver the keynote address Monday.

The Democratic Party likely would have been in a far worse state if Biden had continued to cling to the nomination. He faced growing concerns about his mental and physical acuity after struggling to complete sentences at the debate.

By deciding to step aside and endorse Harris, the 81-year-old president will instead receive a hero's welcome in his final turn in the spotlight 52 years after being elected to the Senate from Delaware.



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Biden is planning to give a lengthy endorsement of Harris and sharply criticize Trump before he leaves Chicago and makes way for the program to focus on the vice president he chose four years ago.

Trump has tried to inflame tensions over Biden's exit. He called Biden's Monday speaking slot "convention death valley," suggesting that the president would get lower ratings than speakers on other nights. And as he has for weeks now, Trump described the convention itself as "rigged" because it was Biden, not Harris, who won 14 million primary votes and collected delegates state by state.

"She got no votes," Trump said.

A focus on Harris' firsts — and an open hand to Republicans

The convention will lean into the party's potential to make history. Harris vies to be the first woman, the first Black woman and the first person of South Asian descent to reach the Oval Office.

"I wasn't sure I would see this particular moment in my lifetime, to see a Black woman who is now on the cusp of becoming our next president," said Illinois Lt. Gov. Juliana Stratton, one of the nation's highest-ranking Black women elected officials.

Stratton recalled Hillary Clinton's loss to Trump eight years ago, one in which she lost key battlegrounds even as she led the national popular vote.

"I remember back in 2016 when we touched the glass ceiling, and the reaction of Republicans was just to start destroying the rights that got us there," Stratton said. "This is another chance."

Harris will aim to use the convention to take a share of credit for what she and Biden accomplished while also trying to show that she recognizes voters want more. Heading into Chicago, she unveiled the initial planks of her policy platform focused on addressing the bite of inflation and the costs of food, housing and childcare.

Democrats will keep abortion access front and center for voters, betting that the issue will propel them to success as it has in other key races since the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* two years ago.

Every living Democratic president and first lady will appear this week, except for the ailing Jimmy Carter, along with a long list of federal, state and local officials and activists.

It's set to be a contrast to last month's GOP convention in Milwaukee, where former President George W. Bush and former vice president Mike Pence, among other well-known Republicans, stayed away from the event given Trump's antipathy toward them.

Expected to speak this week is former Rep. Adam Kinzinger, a Republican who investigated Trump's actions around the Jan. 6 Capitol insurrection and has endorsed Harris.

The presidential race is still very close

With precious few days remaining before early voting begins in some places in September, recent polls show a close race nationally and in battleground states like Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin. And polls show Trump still has advantages on how Americans view the two of them on core issues like the economy and immigration.

Terry McAuliffe, a former Virginia governor and longtime operative who will attend his 13th Democratic convention this week, warned that the euphoria Democrats have about Harris' ascension could obscure the true state of the campaign.

He noted that the Republican convention in Milwaukee was a veritable Trump coronation, with Democrats consumed by anxiety and uncertainty. Now, it's Trump who seems to be reeling as he searches for the right message to stop Harris' rise.

The lesson, McAuliffe said, is never to assume the a campaign is settled and always remember the outcome rests on getting 270 Electoral College votes by winning the right battleground states.

The former president is not ceding this week to Democrats. He will go a different swing state each day — starting with Pennsylvania, followed by Michigan, North Carolina, Arizona and Nevada by week's end.

Trump's campaign has also dispatched high-profile allies to Chicago to host daily news conferences. The lineup includes Florida Sen. Rick Scott, Wisconsin Sen. Ron Johnson and Florida Rep. Byron Donalds.

"We have four days of messaging that the country will get to look at Kamala Harris, get to look at Tim Walz. We'll get to look at their agenda, what they stand for, who we are," McAuliffe said. "It's going to be

a close election. That's just where our country is today."

Whatever happens this week, both sides will be watching with anticipation as Harris writes a new chapter in what has already been a precedent-breaking campaign.

## Favorable views of Kamala Harris have risen this summer heading into the DNC, AP-NORC poll shows

By LINLEY SANDERS Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Vice President Kamala Harris is entering the Democratic National Convention with increased excitement from Democrats and a steady rise in her favorability ratings among Americans as a whole.

About half of U.S. adults — 48% — have a very or somewhat favorable view of Harris, according to a new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. That is up from 39% at the beginning of the summer, before President Joe Biden's poor performance in his debate against former President Donald Trump ultimately led him to drop out of the presidential race.

That's not just an improvement for Harris but also from where President Joe Biden stood before he dropped out, when 38% said they had a favorable opinion of him. It's also somewhat better than the 41% of adults who say they have a favorable opinion of Trump.

The rise in favorability for Harris comes as more Americans overall have formed an opinion about her while the Harris and Trump campaigns rush to define her nascent candidacy. The share saying they don't know enough about her to have an opinion has halved, from 12% in June to 6% now.

The latest measurement is in line with how Americans viewed Harris in early 2021, when she and Biden first took office. It suggests renewed positivity toward Harris — the share of Americans who have a "very favorable" opinion of her has also increased over the same period — but she risks hitting a ceiling as she approaches her previous highest rating.

Potential strengths for Harris

Since June, Harris' favorability has slightly risen among some groups that generally already favor the Democratic Party. She's seen slight increases in favorability among Democrats, independents, women and young adults under age 30. There's been no significant movement from Black adults or Hispanic adults — other constituencies Harris will likely need the support of in November.

Half of adults under 30 have a very or somewhat favorable view of Harris in the latest poll, up from 34% in June. That comes as more young adults have formed an opinion about her, with the share of adults who say they don't know enough to say shrinking from about 2 in 10 to roughly 1 in 10. The number of young adults with an unfavorable view of her has not changed significantly.

Harris has relatively high levels of favorability among Black adults, though it's been relatively steady over the last month. Around two-thirds of Black adults have a very or somewhat positive view of Harris. That includes around 4 in 10 who say their opinion of her is "very favorable." Black adults are more likely than Americans overall to have a favorable impression of Harris. About 6 in 10 nonwhite men and women have a positive view of Harris.

Johnita Johnson, a 45-year-old Black woman living in North Carolina, said she plans to vote for Harris in November, but she wants the campaign to be honest and realistic about what it can promise. She has a problem with politicians, generally, who overpromise what they will be able to accomplish in office.

"If (Harris) was able to do exactly what she wants to do and what she says she would do, she would do an awesome job," Johnson said. "Well, we all know that is not going to go like that. She may get to do some of the things that she wanted to do. Will she do everything? I can't say that she will. And she can't promise me that."

Johnson noted that while Harris is a historic candidate because of her race and sex, it's not something that's factoring into her support.

"It wouldn't matter who it was. ... As long as they are good, and good to us, that's what matters to me," Johnson said. "Yes, of course, to a lot of people, it's exciting because she's Black and she's the first

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woman. But I'm not looking at it."

Possible weaknesses for Harris

To win in November, Harris' team will try to limit the extent to which Trump can run up his vote totals among white and male voters, groups that have leaned toward Republicans in recent elections. Currently, about half of men have a negative view of Harris. About 6 in 10 white men have an unfavorable view of her. White men without a college degree, a group that has traditionally made up Trump's strong base of support, are especially likely to say they have an unfavorable view.

Harris is seen more positively by white women, particularly those with a college degree. About 6 in 10 white women with a college degree view her favorably, compared to about 4 in 10 without one. Overall, white women are split on her: 49% have a favorable opinion and 46% have a negative one.

Views of Harris have been fairly steady among older adults. About half of adults older than 60 have a positive view of her. That's generally in line with the 46% she had with this group in June.

Brian Mowrer, a newly retired 64-year-old in Mishicot, Wisconsin, who was a staunch Republican until voting for President Barack Obama in 2012, plans to vote for Harris in November. He likes Biden and had felt he could do the job for another term, but he was ultimately glad Biden withdrew from the race when it became clear his electability was shrinking.

"I think it's great that Biden stepped down and that they chose Kamala Harris," he said. "Well, I would probably support any Democrat at this point."

Mowrer is motivated by ensuring Trump does not have an opportunity to nominate more conservative justices to the Supreme Court, as he worries about further losing the separation between church and state in the U.S. He also cares about electing someone who will defend access to abortion, which he sees as a personal freedom issue. He believes Harris will focus on both issues.

"I think she's very good. She presents very well. I think she's very authentic," he said. "The policies, or at least the things she's talking about wanting to do, that is along the lines of what I've been thinking needs to be done."

## Thousands of activists expected in Chicago for Democratic convention to call for Gaza cease-fire

By SOPHIA TAREEN Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — Thousands of activists are expected to converge on Chicago this week for the Democratic National Convention, hoping to call attention to abortion rights, economic injustice and the war in Gaza.

While Vice President Kamala Harris has energized crowds of supporters as she prepares to accept the Democratic nomination, progressive activists maintain their mission remains the same.

Activists say they learned lessons from last month's Republican National Convention in Milwaukee and are predicting bigger crowds and more robust demonstrations in Chicago, a city with deep social activism roots.

Who is protesting?

Demonstrations are expected every day of the convention and, while their agendas vary, many activists agree an immediate cease-fire in the Israel-Hamas war is the priority.

Things kicked off Sunday on the convention's eve with a march along Michigan Avenue against the war in Gaza and for abortion and LGBTQ+ rights. The march began in late afternoon and stretched into the night.

Police lined the march route and there were no signs of major conflict. At one point, anti-abortion activists staged a small counter-protest.

Police did not immediately respond to an email asking if there had been arrests more than three hours into the march.

Organizer Linda Loew said even though Democrats have pushed to safeguard reproductive rights at home, the issue is international. They marched in solidarity with people everywhere who struggle for the right to control what happens to their bodies, as well as to protest the money the U.S. spends to back wars that could be used for healthcare, she said.

"We believe that the billions of dollars that continue to flow to the state of Israel and the flow of weapons

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are having an inordinate and horrific impact, but in particular on women, children and the unborn," she said. "All of these things are tied together."

The largest group, the Coalition to March on the DNC, has planned demonstrations on the first and last days of the convention.

Organizers say they expect at least 20,000 activists, including students who protested the war on college campuses.

"The people with power are going to be there," said Liz Rathburn, a University of Illinois Chicago student organizer. "People inside the United Center are the people who are going to be deciding our foreign policy in one way or another."

Where are they protesting?

Activists sued the city earlier this year, saying restrictions over where they can demonstrate violate their constitutional rights.

Chicago leaders rejected their requests for permits to protest near United Center on the city's West Side, where the convention is taking place, offering instead a lakefront park more than 3 miles (5 kilometers) away.

Later, the city agreed to allow demonstrations at a park and a march route closer to the United Center. A federal judge recently signed off on the group's roughly 1-mile (1.6-kilometer) route.

Coalition to March on the DNC spokesman Hatem Abudayyeh said the group is pleased it won the right to protest closer to the convention, but he believes its preferred 2-mile (3-kilometer) march would be safer for larger crowds. The group is chartering buses for activists from about half a dozen states.

"We're going forward, full speed ahead," he said.

The city has designated a park about a block from United Center for a speakers' stage. Those who sign up get 45 minutes.

The Philadelphia-based Poor People's Army, which advocates for economic justice, plans to set up at Humboldt Park on the city's Northwest Side and will feature events with third-party candidates Jill Stein and Cornel West, plus a 3-mile (5 kilometer) march Monday to the United Center.

Some group members have spent the last few weeks marching the more than 80 miles (130 kilometers) from Milwaukee, where they protested during the Republican convention.

"Poor and homeless people are being brutalized, with tents and encampments destroyed and bulldozed away, from San Francisco to Philadelphia to Gaza and the West Bank," spokesperson Cheri Honkala said in a statement as the group reached Illinois. "These preventable human rights violations are being committed by Democratic and Republican leaders alike."

How does a new nominee change things?

Many activists believe nothing much will change because Harris is part of the Biden administration.

"The demands haven't changed. I haven't seen any policy changes," said Erica Bentley, an activist with Mamas Activating Movements for Abolition and Solidarity. "If you're going to be here, you're going to have to listen to what's important to us."

Pro-Palestinian protesters in Chicago have been highly visible, shutting down roads to the airport and staging sit-ins at congressional offices. Some are planning their own one-day convention Sunday with third-party candidates.

"Regardless of who the nominee is, we're marching against the Democrats and their vicious policies that have allowed Israel to kill over 40,000 Palestinians in Gaza," said Fayaani Aboma Mijana, an organizer with the Chicago Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression.

It's unclear if the convention will draw far-right extremists who ardently support former President Donald Trump.

Secret Service Deputy Special Agent in Charge Derek Mayer said last week there are no known specific security threats against the convention.

Is Chicago ready?

The convention will draw an estimated 50,000 people to the nation's third-largest city, including delegates,

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activists and journalists.

The city says it has made necessary preparations with police and the Secret Service. Security will be tight, with street closures around the convention center.

To combat traffic concerns, city leaders are touting a new \$80 million train station steps from the United Center. They also have tried to beautify the city with freshly planted flowers and new signs. City leaders also cleared a nearby homeless encampment.

Police have undergone training on constitutional policing, county courts say they are opening more space in anticipation of mass arrests and hospitals near the security zone are beefing up emergency preparedness.

Authorities and leaders in the state have said people who vandalize the city or are violent will be arrested.

"We're going to make sure that people have their First Amendment rights protected, that they can do that in a safe way," Mayor Brandon Johnson told The Associated Press in a recent interview.

But some have lingering safety concerns, worried that protests could become unpredictable or devolve into chaos.

Activist Hy Thurman protested and was arrested at the infamous 1968 convention. The 74-year-old now lives in Alabama but plans to come to Chicago to protest the war in Gaza.

"It's extremely personal for me," he said. "I see parallels."

Illinois Gov. JB Pritzker has said that he expects peaceful protests.

"We intend to protect the protesters' First Amendment rights, and also the residents of the city of Chicago and the visitors to Chicago at the same time," Pritzker told the AP in a recent interview.

## Quintuplets among Gaza's dead as Blinken visits the region to seek a cease-fire deal

By WAFAA SHURAFU and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — Israeli strikes across Gaza killed 29 people including young quintuplets overnight and into Sunday, health officials said, as U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken arrived in Israel to try to seal a cease-fire deal that could help ease soaring regional tensions.

The U.S. and fellow mediators Egypt and Qatar have said they were closing in on a deal after two days of talks in Doha, with Israeli officials expressing cautious optimism. But Hamas in a statement Sunday accused Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of setting new conditions, including his refusal of a complete withdrawal of forces from Gaza.

The evolving proposal calls for a three-phase process in which Hamas would release all hostages abducted during its Oct. 7 attack, which triggered the deadliest war fought between Israelis and Palestinians. In exchange, Israel would withdraw its forces from Gaza and release Palestinian prisoners.

The war has killed over 40,000 Palestinians, according to local health authorities, displaced the vast majority of the territory's 2.3 million residents and led experts to warn of famine and the outbreak of diseases like polio.

"It is as if we live a primitive life," said Sanaa Akela, a displaced Palestinian in the central town of Deir al-Balah, where sewage flooded some streets.

Hamas-led militants killed some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, in the Oct. 7 attack and abducted around 250. Of those, some 110 are still believed to be in Gaza, though Israeli authorities say around a third are dead. More than 100 hostages were released in November during a weeklong cease-fire.

Several children in a single body bag

The latest Israeli bombardment included a strike on a home in Deir al-Balah that killed a woman and her six children, according to Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital. An Associated Press reporter there counted the bodies.

Mohammed Awad Khatab, the children's grandfather, said his daughter was a teacher, and the youngest child was 18 months. The others were 10-year-old quintuplets, the hospital said.

"The six children have become body parts. They were placed in a single bag," Khatab told reporters. "What did they do? Did they kill any of the Jews? ... Will this provide security to Israel?"

Another strike east of Deir al-Balah killed at least four people, according to an AP journalist at the hospital.

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A strike in the northern town of Jabaliya hit two apartments, killing two men, a woman and her daughter, according to Gaza's Health Ministry. Another two strikes in central Gaza killed nine people, according to Al-Awda Hospital. A strike in Nuseirat killed one person, the hospital said.

Late Saturday, a strike near the southern city of Khan Younis killed four people from the same family, including two women, according to Nasser Hospital.

Israel says it only targets militants and blames civilian deaths on Hamas because the group places fighters, weapons, tunnels and rockets in residential areas. But the Israeli bombardment has wiped out entire extended families and orphaned thousands of children.

Israel says 'cautious optimism' about talks

Mediation efforts gained new urgency after the targeted killing of two top militants last month, both attributed to Israel, brought vows of revenge from Iran and the Lebanese Hezbollah, raising fears of all-out war across the Middle East.

An American official said Friday that mediators were beginning preparations for implementing the latest cease-fire proposal, and Netanyahu's office expressed "cautious optimism" a deal could be reached.

An Israeli delegation was traveling to Cairo on Sunday for further talks, and Blinken will meet with Netanyahu on Monday. Blinken will travel to Egypt on Tuesday for meetings with officials there, the State Department said, and may stop in at least one other regional country.

Netanyahu told a Cabinet meeting there are areas where Israel can be flexible and unspecified areas where it won't be. "We are conducting negotiations and not a scenario in which we just give and give," he said.

Hamas has cast doubt on whether an agreement is near, saying the latest proposal diverged significantly from a previous iteration it accepted in principle. Hamas has rejected Israel's demands for a lasting military presence along the Gaza-Egypt border and a line bisecting Gaza where Israeli forces would search Palestinians returning to their homes. Israel says both are needed to prevent militants from rearming and returning to the north.

Israel showed flexibility on retreating from the border corridor, and a meeting between Egyptian and Israeli military officials was scheduled for the week ahead to agree on a withdrawal mechanism, according to two Egyptian officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the private negotiations.

Vice President Kamala Harris, asked Sunday whether she thinks Netanyahu is ready for a cease-fire deal, said: "I will not speak for him, but I will tell you that these conversations are ongoing and we are not giving up, and we are going to continue to work very hard on this. We've got to get a cease-fire and we got to get those hostages out."

Blast wounds peacekeepers in Lebanon

In Lebanon, three U.N. peacekeepers were lightly wounded when an explosion struck their vehicle near the southern village of Yarin. The peacekeeping mission said the incident was under investigation.

Hezbollah began launching near-daily drone and rocket attacks along the border after the war in Gaza began, drawing Israeli retaliation in a cycle of violence that has steadily escalated.

A bomb explosion on a Tel Aviv street Sunday night killed one person and police were investigating the circumstances.

In the Israeli-occupied West Bank, which has also seen a surge of violence, gunmen marched in a funeral procession for two Hamas commanders killed in an Israeli airstrike in Jenin the day before.

## Harris and Walz make small-town stops and campaign phone calls on Pennsylvania bus tour before DNC

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE and MICHELLE L. PRICE Associated Press

ROCHESTER, Pa. (AP) — Democratic presidential nominee Kamala Harris and running mate Tim Walz gave pep talks to campaign volunteers and a high school football team Sunday, with their bus tour in a corner of Pennsylvania serving as a modest, small-town version of the grand rally she's expected to have

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at the Democratic nominating convention in Chicago this week.

Vice President Harris and Walz, the governor of Minnesota, were joined by their spouses, Doug Emhoff and Gwen Walz, as they stopped off to visit volunteers at a campaign office not far from Pittsburgh before continuing on to a firehouse and a high school in another town. The tour, in a bright blue bus decorated with the candidates' names and the phrase "A new way forward," also included pilgrimages to a convenience store and a restaurant known for its towering sandwiches.

Despite running as the sitting vice president, Harris told reporters she feels she has ground to make up in the race against former President Donald Trump, the Republican presidential nominee.

"I very much consider us the underdogs," Harris said at a stop in the township of Moon. "We have a lot of work to do to earn the vote of the American people. That's why we're on this bus tour today, and we're going to be traveling this country as we've been and talking with folks, listening to folks, and hopefully earning their votes over the next 79 days."

Southwestern Pennsylvania is a critical part of a key battleground state that has long commanded the attention of presidential candidates. The state voted for Trump in 2016 and for Biden in 2020. Both Harris and Trump are vying to see who can put Pennsylvania in their column on Nov. 5.

Trump, who is counting on strong turnout from his base of white, working-class voters, is not conceding the area. The counties around Pittsburgh have shifted from Democratic to Republican in recent presidential contests, delivering for Trump in both of his earlier runs.

In a demonstration of the area's competing politics, Harris' bus and motorcade twice on Sunday rolled past groups of Trump supporters with signs and banners bearing his name.

At her last stop, the vice president answered a few questions from reporters, something she's been doing with increasing frequency as Trump has claimed she's afraid to talk to the media and made a point of holding his own news conferences in recent weeks.

Throughout their tour Sunday, Harris and Walz shied away from policy or much politics in their remarks, instead sticking to broad-strokes messages focused on character, perseverance and the future of the country.

Harris, while speaking to a group of supporters and volunteers outside a campaign office in the borough of Rochester, spoke about strength and leadership. She appeared to make a veiled reference to Trump, who is known for his pugilistic style and projection of a strongman image, when she said the "real and true measure of a strength of a leader is based on who you lift up," rather than who they beat down.

"Anybody who is about beating down other people is a coward," she yelled, drawing cheers and applause. "This is what strength looks like."

Walz seemed to assume the role of his former job coaching high school football and told the volunteers: "Let's leave it all on the field. Let's get this thing done."

The vice president next stopped at a firehouse in Aliquippa, where she met firefighters, petted the station's dog and gave the crew almond pastries, before heading to a nearby high school, she and Walz met with the local football coach and addressed the team, who knelt on the field to listen.

Walz again slipped into coach mode, reminiscing a bit about his days leading a team before introducing Harris. She praised the young athletes for their leadership: "Our nation is counting on you and your excellence. We applaud your ambition."

She also told them, "Welcome to the role model club."

Most polls, including recent surveys from the New York Times/Siena College and Fox News, find Harris and Trump locked in a tight race statewide.

Trump held a rally Saturday in Wilkes-Barre in the northeastern part of the state, following his earlier rallies in July in Harrisburg and Butler, where he survived an assassination attempt.

The bus tour marks Harris' eighth trip to Pennsylvania this year, and her second this month. The vice president chose to make her first joint appearance with Walz on the ticket in Philadelphia on Aug. 6.

On Sunday, Harris and Walz arrived with their spouses at Pittsburgh International Airport, where they held hands and raised their arms together in front of cheering supporters. The foursome then set off on their bus to glad-hand with voters in the Pittsburgh area.

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At a stop in the township of Moon, Harris popped into a Sheetz convenience store to seek out Doritos, her go-to snack. She later stopped at a Primanti Bros. restaurant, a famed chain known for sandwiches layered with coleslaw and fries, where she met diners and posed for a few pictures. Both franchises were launched in western Pennsylvania.

Earlier in the day in Rochester, Harris, Walz and their spouses spent a few minutes sitting at tables with volunteers and making phone calls to line up support.

Harris took a cellphone from a volunteer and spoke to the person on the other end.

"I love Erie. At some point we'll get to Erie," Harris said.

She continued the conversation and at one point said, "79 days to go."

Walz, sitting across the table from Harris, hung up from a call, said of the caller, "He's all in," and gave a thumbs up.

Kristin Kanthak, associate professor of political science at the University of Pittsburgh, said Pennsylvania "is a state that traditionally has been super important, but southwestern Pennsylvania has been really kind of the battleground part of the battleground state."

After Trump's surprise win in the state in 2016, Biden flipped Pennsylvania in 2020 — and, in so doing, won the White House — in part by running up his vote totals in heavily Democratic Pittsburgh, the state's second-largest city.

Trump has embraced protectionist trade policies and insists he is pro-worker. His vow to increase U.S. energy production and "drill, baby, drill" has resonated in southwestern Pennsylvania blue-collar counties like Washington, where a natural gas drilling boom has helped make Pennsylvania the nation's No. 2 producer after Texas. Harris once wanted to ban fracking, an oil and gas extraction process, before recently disavowing her earlier position — a reversal Trump has hammered her for.

Bus tours like the one Harris embarked on in Pennsylvania have become a staple of political campaigns partly because of the free media coverage they generate. Such trips get the candidates out of their power suits and out of Washington so they can travel the country and score face time with voters in small venues like diners and mom-and-pop shops.

The low-key venues of Harris' campaign on Sunday will be replaced with their polar opposite Monday when the Democratic National Convention opens in Chicago, offering a prime-time showcase that director Steven Spielberg is helping to choreograph.

## French actor and heartthrob Alain Delon dies at 88

By SYLVIE CORBET and THOMAS ADAMSON Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — Alain Delon, the internationally acclaimed French actor who embodied both the bad guy and the policeman and made hearts throb around the world, died at age 88, French media reported.

With his handsome looks and tender manner, the prolific actor was able to combine toughness with an appealing, vulnerable quality that made him one of France's memorable leading men.

Delon was also a producer. He also appeared in plays, and in later years, in television movies.

French President Emmanuel Macron paid tribute on X to "a French monument."

"Alain Delon has played legendary roles and made the world dream," he wrote. "Melancholic, popular, secretive, he was more than a star."

Delon's children announced the death on Sunday in a statement to the French national news agency Agence France-Presse, a common practice in France. Tributes to Delon immediately started pouring in on social platforms, and all leading French media switched to full-fledged coverage of his rich career.

Earlier this year, his son Anthony had said his father had been diagnosed with B-cell lymphoma, a type of cancer.

Over the past year, Delon's fragile health condition had been at the heart of a family dispute over his care that gave rise to bitter exchanges through the media among his three children.

At the prime of his career, in the 1960s and 1970s, Delon was sought out by some of the world's top directors, from Luchino Visconti to Joseph Losey.



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In his later years, Delon grew disillusioned with the movie industry, saying that money had killed the dream. "Money, commerce and television have wrecked the dream machine," he wrote in a 2003 edition of the newsweekly, *Le Nouvel Observateur*. "My cinema is dead. And me, too."

But he continued to work frequently, appearing in several TV movies in his 70s.

Delon's presence was unforgettable, whether playing morally depraved heroes or romantic leading men. He first drew acclaim in 1960 with "Plein Soleil," directed by René Clément, in which he played a murderer trying to take on the identity of his victims.

He made several Italian movies, working, most notably with Visconti in the 1961 film "Rocco and His Brothers," in which Delon portrays a self-sacrificing brother intent on helping his sibling. The movie won the Special Jury Prize at the Venice Film Festival.

The 1963 Visconti film "Le Guepard" (The Leopard) starring Delon won the Palme d'Or, the highest honor at the Cannes Film Festival. His other films included Clément's "Is Paris Burning," with a screenplay by Gore Vidal and Francis Ford Coppola among others; "La Piscine" (The Sinners), directed by Jacques Deray; and, in a departure, Losey's "The Assassination of Trotsky" in 1972.

In 1968, Delon began producing movies — 26 of them by 1990 — part of a frenzied and self-assured momentum that he maintained throughout his life.

His confidence was palpable in his statement to *Femme* in 1996, "I like to be loved the way I love myself!" This echoed his charismatic screen persona.

Delon continued to captivate audiences for years — on the way courting criticism for comments deemed outdated. In 2010, he appeared in "Un mari de trop" ("One Husband Too Many") and returned to the stage in 2011 with "An Ordinary Day," alongside his daughter Anouchka.

He briefly presided over the Miss France jury but stepped down in 2013 after a disagreement over some controversial statements, which included critiques on women, LGBTQIA+ rights, and migrants. Despite these controversies, he received a Palme d'Honneur at the 2019 Cannes Film Festival, a decision that sparked further debate.

The Cannes Film Festival on Sunday expressed its "sadness." Delon "embodied French cinema far beyond its borders," it said, in a statement.

The Brigitte Bardot Foundation, dedicated to animal protection, paid tribute to "an exceptional man, an unforgettable artist and a great friend of animals," in a statement released on social media. Delon was "a close friend" of French film legend Brigitte Bardot "who is deeply saddened by his passing," the statement said. "We lose a precious friend and a man with a big heart."

French film producer Alain Terzian said Delon was "the last of the giants."

"It's a page being turned in the history of French cinema," he told France Inter radio. Terzian, who produced several films directed by Delon, recalled that "every time he arrived somewhere ... there was a kind of almost mystical, quasi-religious respect. He was fascinating."

Born on Nov. 8, 1935, in Sceaux, just south of Paris, Delon was placed with a foster family after his parents' separation when he was 4. He then attended a Roman Catholic boarding school.

At 17, Delon joined the navy and was sent to Indochina. Back in France in 1956, he held various odd jobs from waiter to a carrier in the Paris meat market before turning to acting.

Delon had a son, Anthony, in 1964 with his then-wife Nathalie Canovas, who played alongside him in Jean-Pierre Melville's "The Samurai" in 1967. He had two more children, Anouchka and Alain-Fabien, with a later companion, Rosalie van Breemen, with whom he produced a song and video clip in 1987. He was also widely believed to have been the father of Ari Boulogne, the son of German model and singer Nico, although he never publicly acknowledged paternity.

"I am very good at three things: my job, foolishness and children," he said in a 1995 *L'Express* interview.

Delon juggled diverse activities throughout his life, from setting up a stable of trotting horses to developing cologne for men and women, followed by watches, glasses and other accessories. He also collected paintings and sculptures.

Delon announced an end to his acting career in 1999, only to continue, appearing in Bertrand Blier's "Les

Acteurs" (The Actors) the same year. Later he appeared in several television police shows.

His good looks sustained him. In August 2002, Delon told a weekly magazine, *L'Humanite Hebdo*, that he wouldn't still be in the business if that weren't so.

"You'll never see me old and ugly," he said when he was already nearing 70, "because I'll leave before, or I'll die."

However, it was in 2019 that Delon encapsulated his feelings about his life's meaning during a gala event honoring him at the Cannes Film Festival. "One thing I'm sure about is that if there's something I'm proud of, really, the only thing, it's my career."

## Can AI truly replicate the screams of a man on fire? Video game performers want their work protected

By SARAH PARVINI AP Technology Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — For hours, motion capture sensors tacked onto Noshir Dalal's body tracked his movements as he unleashed aerial strikes, overhead blows and single-handed attacks that would later show up in a video game. He eventually swung the sledgehammer gripped in his hand so many times that he tore a tendon in his forearm. By the end of the day, he couldn't pull the handle of his car door open.

The physical strain this type of motion work entails, and the hours put into it, are part of the reason why he believes all video-game performers should be protected equally from the use of unregulated artificial intelligence.

Video game performers say they fear AI could reduce or eliminate job opportunities because the technology could be used to replicate one performance into a number of other movements without their consent. That's a concern that led the Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists to go on strike in late July.

"If motion-capture actors, video-game actors in general, only make whatever money they make that day ... that can be a really slippery slope," said Dalal, who portrayed Bode Akuna in "Star Wars Jedi: Survivor." "Instead of being like, 'Hey, we're going to bring you back' ... they're just not going to bring me back at all and not tell me at all that they're doing this. That's why transparency and compensation are so important to us in AI protections."

Hollywood's video game performers announced a work stoppage — their second in a decade — after more than 18 months of negotiations over a new interactive media agreement with game industry giants broke down over artificial intelligence protections. Members of the union have said they are not anti-AI. The performers are worried, however, the technology could provide studios with a means to displace them.

Dalal said he took it personally when he heard that the video game companies negotiating with SAG-AFTRA over a new contract wanted to consider some movement work "data" and not performance.

If gamers were to tally up the cut scenes they watch in a game and compare them with the hours they spend controlling characters and interacting with non-player characters, they would see that they interact with "movers" and stunt performers' work "way more than you interact with my work," Dalal said.

"They are the ones selling the world these games live in, when you're doing combos and pulling off crazy, super cool moves using Force powers, or you're playing Master Chief, or you're Spider-Man swinging through the city," he said.

Some actors argue that AI could strip less-experienced actors of the chance to land smaller background roles, such as non-player characters, where they typically cut their teeth before landing larger jobs. The unchecked use of AI, performers say, could also lead to ethical issues if their voices or likenesses are used to create content that they do not morally agree with. That type of ethical dilemma has recently surfaced with game "mods," in which fans alter and create new game content. Last year, voice actors spoke out against such mods in the role-playing game "Skyrim," which used AI to generate actors' performances and cloned their voices for pornographic content.

In video game motion capture, actors wear special Lycra or neoprene suits with markers on them. In

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addition to more involved interactions, actors perform basic movements like walking, running or holding an object. Animators grab from those motion capture recordings and chain them together to respond to what someone playing the game is doing.

"What AI is allowing game developers to do, or game studios to do, is generate a lot of those animations automatically from past recordings," said Brian Smith, an assistant professor at Columbia University's Department of Computer Science. "No longer do studios need to gather new recordings for every single game and every type of animation that they would like to create. They can also draw on their archive of past animation."

If a studio has motion capture banked from a previous game and wants to create a new character, he said, animators could use those stored recordings as training data.

"With generative AI, you can generate new data based on that pattern of prior data," he said.

A spokesperson for the video game producers, Audrey Cooling, said the studios offered "meaningful" AI protections, but SAG-AFTRA's negotiating committee said that the studios' definition of who constitutes a "performer" is key to understanding the issue of who would be protected.

"We have worked hard to deliver proposals with reasonable terms that protect the rights of performers while ensuring we can continue to use the most advanced technology to create a great gaming experience for fans," Cooling said. "We have proposed terms that provide consent and fair compensation for anyone employed under the (contract) if an AI reproduction or digital replica of their performance is used in games."

The game companies offered wage increases, she said, with an initial 7% increase in scale rates and an additional 7.64% increase effective in November. That's an increase of 14.5% over the life of the contract. The studios had also agreed to increases in per diems, payment for overnight travel and a boost in overtime rates and bonus payments, she added.

"Our goal is to reach an agreement with the union that will end this strike," Cooling said.

A 2023 report on the global games market from industry tracker Newzoo predicted that video games would begin to include more AI-generated voices, similar to the voice acting in "High on Life" from Squanch Games. Game developers, the Amsterdam-based firm said, will use AI to produce unique voices, bypassing the need to source voice actors.

"Voice actors may see fewer opportunities in the future, especially as game developers use AI to cut development costs and time," the report said, noting that "big AAA prestige games like 'The Last of Us' and 'God of War' use motion capture and voice acting similarly to Hollywood."

Other games, such as "Cyberpunk 2077," cast celebrities.

Actor Ben Prendergast said that data points collected for motion capture don't pick up the "essence" of someone's performance as an actor. The same is true, he said, of AI-generated voices that can't deliver the nuanced choices that go into big scenes — or smaller, strenuous efforts like screaming for 20 seconds to portray a character's death by fire.

"The big issue is that someone, somewhere has this massive data, and I now have no control over it," said Prendergast, who voices Fuse in the game "Apex Legends." "Nefarious or otherwise, someone can pick up that data now and go, we need a character that's nine feet tall, that sounds like Ben Prendergast and can fight this battle scene. And I have no idea that that's going on until the game comes out."

Studios would be able to "get away with that," he said, unless SAG-AFTRA can secure the AI protections they are fighting for.

"It reminds me a lot of sampling in the '80s and '90s and 2000s where there were a lot of people getting around sampling classic songs," he said. "This is an art. If you don't protect rights over their likeness, or their voice or body and walk now, then you can't really protect humans from other endeavors."

## Democrats are dwindling in Wyoming.

### A primary election law further reduces their influence

By MEAD GRUVER Associated Press

LUSK, Wyo. (AP) — In some far reaches of rural America, Democrats are flirting with extinction. In Niobrara County, Wyoming, the least-populated county in the least-populated state, Becky Blackburn is one of just 32 left.

Her neighbors call her “the crazy Democrat,” although it’s more a term of endearment than derision.

Some less populated counties have fewer. There are 21 Democrats in Clark County, Idaho, and 20 in Blaine County, Nebraska. But Niobrara County’s Democrats, who account for just 2.6% of registered voters, are the most outnumbered by Republicans in the 30 states that track local party affiliation, according to Associated Press election data.

In Wyoming, the state that has voted for Donald Trump by a wider margin than any other, overwhelming Republican dominance may be even more cemented-in now that the state has passed a law that makes changing party affiliation much more difficult.

Tuesday’s primary will be the first election since the law took effect.

In Niobrara County’s grassy rangelands and pine-spattered hills adjoining Nebraska and South Dakota, it’s not easy being blue.

A paralegal for the Republican county attorney, Blackburn hears a lot of right-wing views around town.

“Normally I just roll my eyes and walk away because I’m fighting a losing battle and I’m fully aware of that,” she said. “Maybe that is why I’m well-liked, because I keep my mouth shut 10 times more than I want to.”

Not that she’s politically shy. She flies an LGBTQ+ flag in support of her lesbian daughter at her house in Lusk, a ranching town of 1,500 and the Niobrara County seat.

In political season, Blackburn stocks up on Democratic political signs to replace those that get swiped. She speaks approvingly of policing reform, taxation for government services and the transgender social media celebrity Dylan Mulvaney.

Maybe because she’s open about those views — and far too outnumbered to put them into action — Blackburn really does seem well-liked in Lusk, where she recently served nine years on the Town Council.

“I won two elections here. Even though that’s nonpartisan, people still knew I had left-leaning values,” she said.

Nationwide, Democrats account for fewer than 3% of voters in three counties this year, up from one county in 2020 but down from seven in 2016. There were none with such a low percentage of Democratic registrations in the presidential election years of 2012, 2008 and 2004, according to the AP data.

The most Republican counties in recent years are concentrated in Idaho, Utah and Wyoming. The most Democratic areas, meanwhile, are much less one-party-dominant.

The District of Columbia, where 77% of voters are Democrats, ranks second for Democratic dominance. First is Breathitt County, Kentucky, which through tradition is 79% Democratic but not to the core. Republican vice-presidential candidate JD Vance has family there and in 2020 the county went 75% for former President Donald Trump.

Niobrara County was not always quite so Republican. It had more than twice as many Democrats, 83, in 2012, and in 2004 there were more than four times as many, 139.

The Democrats’ struggle in Wyoming mirrors the party’s challenges across rural America, where the party has been losing ground for years.

It wasn’t always this way. Seventy years ago, Democrats were a political force across southern Wyoming, where union mining and railroad jobs were abundant. Now, the party’s only strongholds are in the university town of Laramie and resort town of Jackson.

Meanwhile, as Wyoming Democrats face difficulty fielding viable candidates at all levels, many Democrats have been switching their registration to vote in more competitive Republican primaries, then changing back for the general election.

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"You feel skeezy and dirty when you do it. But you do it anyway and you change it back as soon as you can, because you don't want to start getting the Republican mailings," Blackburn said.

Republicans decided they'd had enough. The Wyoming Legislature, where the GOP controls over 90% of the seats, passed legislation last year banning voters from changing their party registration in the three months before the August primary.

Party-switching had "undermined the sanctity of Wyoming's primary process," Wyoming's Republican secretary of state, Chuck Gray, said in a statement of approval.

Wyoming's Republican and Democratic primaries on Tuesday will be the first in modern memory where voters won't be able to change party affiliation at the polls.

For Democrats, it will be slim pickings. Statewide, obscure candidates who have done little campaigning are unopposed for the Democratic nomination for U.S. House and Senate.

In Niobrara County, no Democrats are running. They aren't contesting a seat in the Wyoming House of Representatives or an open seat on the county commission, the two major races, or even running for local party positions.

Yet the area had a Democratic state representative not too long ago: Ross Diercks, who is recognized and warmly greeted at the Outpost Cafe, a homey breakfast and lunch spot in Lusk.

A former middle school English teacher, Diercks was a Republican before deciding the GOP didn't do enough to support public education. He beat a Republican incumbent in 1992 to launch an 18-year run in the Legislature.

Knowing voters personally and keeping up on issues helped him hold office. When he got a C-minus on a National Rifle Association questionnaire, for example, he resolved to improve. For subsequent elections, he scored A's on the survey.

Many Republican lawmakers are friends. When one from just down the road died, he sang at his funeral.

Then in 2022, Diercks temporarily switched parties to vote in the GOP primary against Harriet Hageman, who was challenging then-Rep. Liz Cheney for the state's lone House seat. How many other Democrats did the same is hard to count, but Diercks was far from alone. Hageman, the daughter of the lawmaker he sang for at his funeral, nonetheless won the race by a wide margin.

The new law keeping Diercks and others from switching their registration so easily has him exasperated with the GOP.

"How far are they going to go to limit one's ability to vote? If it really comes down to purifying the party, on a voting level all the way up to the elected officials, pretty soon there isn't going to be anyone left who's pure enough to be in the party," Diercks said.

Truck driver Pat Jordan supports many left-leaning goals, including universal healthcare, but said he only registers as a Republican.

"The best way to participate in meaningful change is to try to sway the dominant party," said Jordan, who lives in Niobrara County. "You know, we need to have a government that serves the people, all of them, not just Republicans and not just rural and not just urban and not just Democrats — and definitely not just the rich and the wealthy."

Last winter, dozens of locals gathered outside to honk and cheer as one Democrat left town. But they weren't cheering as Ed Fullmer was headed off for good.

Fullmer was on the high school boys basketball team bus as they left for the state championship. They lost, but Fullmer coached the Tigers to their best record in a decade, 20-8.

He said people know his views but rarely put him on the spot about politics.

"Most people don't want to dive into those type of discussions," he said. "They respect you for what you do, how you work."

Blackburn, for one, intends to hold her political ground, even as it shrinks around her.

"I am who I am, and I have the views that I have," she said. "And I don't care if it bothers people or not."

## Trump zigzags between economic remarks and personal insults at rally in critical Pennsylvania

By ADRIANA GOMEZ LICON, MICHAEL RUBINKAM and MICHELLE L. PRICE Associated Press  
WILKES-BARRE, Pa. (AP) — Former President Donald Trump on Saturday repeatedly swerved from a message focused on the economy into non sequiturs and personal attacks, including thrice declaring that he was better looking than Vice President Kamala Harris.

Trump wound back and forth between hitting his points on economic policy and delivering a smattering of insults and impressions of President Joe Biden and French President Emmanuel Macron as he held a rally in northeastern Pennsylvania.

The former president has seemed to struggle to adjust to his new opponent after Democrats replaced their nominee. Over the past week, he has diverged during campaign appearances away from the policies he was billed to speak about and instead diverted to a rotation of familiar attack lines and insults.

As he attacked Democrats for inflation at the top of his speech, Trump asked his crowd of supporters, "You don't mind if I go off teleprompter for a second, do you? Joe Biden hates her."

Joseph Costello, a spokesperson for the Harris campaign, responded to Trump in a statement by saying, "Another rally, same old show" and that Trump "resorts to lies, name-calling, and confused rants," because he can't sell his agenda.

"The more Americans hear Trump speak, the clearer the choice this November: Vice President Harris is unifying voters with her positive vision to protect our freedoms, build up the middle class, and move America forward — and Donald Trump is trying to take us backwards," Costello said.

Trump's rally in Wilkes-Barre was in a swath of a pivotal battleground state where he hopes conservative, white working-class voters near Biden's hometown of Scranton will boost the Republican's chances of winning back the White House.

His remarks Saturday came as Democrats prepare for their four-day national convention that kicks off Monday in Chicago and will mark the party's welcoming of Harris as their nominee. Her replacement of Biden less than four months before the November election has reinvigorated Democrats and their coalition. It has also presented a new challenge for Trump.

Trump hammered Harris on the economy, associating her with the Biden administration's inflation woes and likening her latest proposal against price gouging to measures in communist nations. Trump has said a federal ban on price gouging for groceries would lead to food shortages, rationing and hunger. On Saturday asked why she hadn't worked to solve prices when she and Biden were sworn into office in 2021.

"Day one for Kamala was three and a half years ago. So why didn't she do it then? So this is day 1,305," Trump said.

To address high prices, Trump said he would sign an executive order on his first day sworn in as president "directing every cabinet secretary and agency head to use every power we have to drive prices down, but we're going to drive them down in a capitalist way, not in a communist way," he said.

He predicted financial ruin for the country, and Pennsylvania in particular, if Harris wins, citing her past opposition to fracking, an oil and gas extraction process commonly used in the state. Her campaign has tried to soften her stance on fracking, saying she would not ban it, even though that was her position when she was seeking the 2020 presidential nomination.

"Your state's going to be ruined anyway. She's totally anti-fracking," Trump said.

But he also meandered, going from ripping the chaotic withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2021 to doing impressions of Macron's French accent.

Trump laced in attacks on Harris' laugh and said she was "not a very good wordsmith" and mocked the names of the CNN anchors who moderated the debate he had with Biden in June.

When he began musing on Harris' recent image on the cover of Time magazine, he commented on the picture's resemblance to classic Hollywood icons Sophia Loren and Elizabeth Taylor and then took issue with a Wall Street Journal columnist remarking earlier this month on Harris' beauty.

"I am much better looking than her," Trump said, drawing laughs from the crowd. "I'm a better looking

person than Kamala.”

He also took issue with the way his style is typically portrayed in news reports.

“They will say he’s rambling. I don’t ramble. I’m a really smart guy,” he said.

Trump’s Saturday rally was his fifth at the arena in Wilkes-Barre, the largest city in Luzerne County, where he has had victories in the past two elections. Biden bested Trump in neighboring Lackawanna County, where the Democrat has long promoted his working-class roots in Scranton.

On Sunday, Harris plans a bus tour starting in Pittsburgh, with a stop in Rochester, a small town to the north. Trump has scheduled a visit Monday to a plant that manufactures nuclear fuel containers in York. Trump’s running mate JD Vance is expected to be in Philadelphia that day.

Some of Biden’s loyal supporters in Scranton, a former industrial city of 76,000, were upset to see party leaders put pressure on the president to step aside.

Diane Munley, 63, says she called dozens of members of Congress to vouch for Biden. Munley eventually came to terms with Biden’s decision and is now very supportive of Harris.

“I can’t deny the enthusiasm that’s been going on with this ticket right now. I am so into it,” Munley said. “It just wasn’t happening with Joe, and I couldn’t see it at the time because I was so connected to him.”

Robert A. Bridy, 64, a laborer from Shamokin, Pennsylvania, traveled on Saturday to the rally to show support for Trump. He said the election feels tight in this state and added that his union and a close friend are trying to convince him to vote for Harris and other Democrats, but he has voted for Trump since 2016.

Bridy called Trump a “working class guy like us.” Trump is a billionaire who built his fortune in real estate.

“He’s a fighter,” Bridy said. “I’d like to see the closed borders. He doesn’t mess around. He goes at it right away and takes care of business the way it should be.”

Price reported from New York. Associated Press writers Bill Barrow in Atlanta and Darlene Superville in Arlington, Virginia contributed to this report.

## **Black men emerge as key constituency in 2024 race, bringing dynamic views to the top of politics**

By MATT BROWN Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Every Monday evening, the Andrew and Walter Young Family YMCA basement becomes a sanctuary for men who, local leaders say, have too often been denied one.

The Black Man Lab, which for nearly a decade has sought weekly to create a “safe, sacred and healing space” for Black men in metropolitan Atlanta, regularly gathers more than 100 men to pray, meditate and talk through challenges and triumphs they are facing and learn from peers and elders.

“It’s almost a communion,” said Carttrel Coleman, a visual artist from South Fulton, Georgia, who has attended the weekly meetings for seven years. “It’s an opportunity for us to share our voices and get resources. The networking is always a good thing. It’s a fellowship, of sorts.”

One recent meeting in the immediate aftermath of President Joe Biden’s suspension of his reelection campaign took on special weight as attendees considered the prospect of a Black woman winning the presidency. The candidacy of Vice President Kamala Harris has refocused attention on Black men, a demographic that Democrats and Republicans view as persuadable but whose multifaceted experiences and political preferences often go unaddressed in public debate.

Harris’ campaign has also reignited discussions amongst Black men about their influence in this election.

“Black men are the target, and we hold the keys to the kingdom. This is our moment,” said Lance Robertson, executive director of the Black City Councilmen of Georgia, during the meeting. “The Black man has built America. Now it’s time for the Black man to save America.”

Black male voters are traditionally one of the most consistently Democratic leaning demographics in the nation. This year, however, both major parties view Black men, especially those under the age of 40, as attainable voters. Whether Black men turn out in high numbers and to what degree they maintain traditional support for Democratic candidates may prove decisive in November.

“To be frank, I think early on in this process a lot of Black men viewed this election with much skepticism

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and dread," said Bishop Reginald Jackson, who presides over all 534 African Methodist Episcopal churches in Georgia. "But since the change in the Democratic ticket, there has been a turnaround. I think they feel they have something that they can support. I think a lot of issues which made a lot of them skeptical are being addressed."

At the Black Man Lab event, the men present came from all walks of life. Attendees' ages ranged from 8 to 86, with multiple pairings of fathers, grandfathers and grandsons telling the group about the unique circumstances each generation faces as Black men in America.

Black voters have historically prioritized policies on civil rights and economic mobility, leading to overwhelming support for Democrats.

But how those concerns translate into political preferences has shifted as traditional ties to institutions like the Black church have frayed for some younger Black Americans. "The Black church, in a lot of respects, has been a turnoff for the Black man, and we're only now working to address the need and correct it," Jackson said.

For many younger Black men, advocates stressed, issues like wealth creation, entrepreneurship, police reform and anti-discrimination policies in the workplace are top of mind.

"We want to see jobs and opportunity for Black men, especially," said Andre Greenwood, chair of the YMCA that hosts the Black Man Lab event. Greenwood, who supports Harris, said economic messages will be most important to Black male voters.

Harris' entrance into the presidential race has unleashed a flurry of organizing among her Black male allies. A day after Biden dropped out of the race and endorsed Harris, a virtual conference tailored for Black men garnered more than 53,000 attendees and raised more than \$1.3 million. The event, organized by Win With Black Men, a collective of Black male-led groups, has hosted regular meetings every week since then to engage organizers targeting Black men.

"Up until this point, these folks were not really engaged with this campaign season, let alone volunteering for outside organizations. I think what we're seeing now is a massive level of organic energy that you can't deny," said Quentin James, founder of the Collective PAC, a Democratic political action committee that supports Black candidates.

Win With Black Men said it would direct the raised funds to organizations nationwide for Black male engagement. More than 150 groups have applied for support. James stressed that while the recent fundraising windfall is notable, the Harris campaign's own engagement effort with Black men may not be enough unless it is paired with robustly funded outside groups that have longstanding trust in local communities.

Harris has also revamped her outreach to Black men. The campaign believes it has a winning message for Black men's priorities.

"It's wealth and it's health," Democratic strategist Antjuan Seawright said of the message.

Seawright leads the Democratic National Committee's "Chop It Up" town halls for Black men at barber shops and other venues in battleground states this year. He noted that Black men "aren't monolithic" and added that it is a mistake for campaigns to assume "we only care about criminal justice reform."

The culminating effort also aims to address longstanding skepticism among many Black men about the political system, which is seen as discriminatory and unresponsive to their interests. Others have tackled potential hesitancy among men about electing a woman to the nation's highest office.

Republicans, too, see an opportunity to make inroads with Black men precisely because of those longstanding frustrations. Donald Trump often speaks of his interest in garnering greater Black voter support. Black Republicans, including Reps. Byron Donalds of Florida and Wesley Hunt of Texas, have hosted a "Congress, Cognac, and Cigars" event series in cities including Atlanta, Philadelphia and Milwaukee.

"Black men have been taken for granted by the Democratic Party for years, but President Trump's message is resonating at historic levels because he is doing the work," said Janiyah Thomas, Black media director for the Trump campaign.

Marcus Robinson, a senior spokesperson for the Democratic National Committee, called Republican outreach strategy "hot air, racially charged rhetoric and offensive stereotypes, from questioning Vice President Harris's identity to claiming Black voters should relate to Trump because he is a convicted felon."

For many attendees at the Black Man Lab event, the reinvigorated presidential race is an opportunity to make sure their interests are addressed at the highest levels of government.



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"I was in the street doing wild stuff and this saved my life," said Damon Bod, an exterior house technician from Atlanta, of his experience with the Black Man Lab event. Bod said he lost his entire immediate family to violence and that the event provided him counsel and a community.

He said he would support Harris in the election because the men who supported him felt she would advance Black men's interests.

"I've been looking at it and hopefully she'll do a bit of good. My brothers have said she will, people who know me. But only God knows," Bod said.

## Today in History: August 19, last U.S. combat troops leave Iraq

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Monday, Aug. 19, the 232nd day of 2024. There are 134 days left in the year.

Today in History:

On Aug. 19, 2010, the last American combat brigade exited Iraq, seven years and five months after a U.S.-led invasion marked the beginning of the Iraq War.

Also on this date:

In 1692, four men and one woman were hanged after being convicted of witchcraft at Salem in the Province of Massachusetts Bay; the story of one of the men, John Proctor, inspired Arthur Miller's play "The Crucible."

In 1807, Robert Fulton's North River Steamboat arrived in Albany, two days after leaving New York on its maiden voyage.

In 1812, the USS Constitution defeated the British frigate HMS Guerriere off Nova Scotia during the War of 1812, earning the nickname "Old Ironsides."

In 1814, during the War of 1812, British forces landed at Benedict, Maryland, with the objective of capturing Washington D.C.

In 1854, 31 U.S. soldiers were killed after one of the soldiers fatally shot Brule Lakota Chief Conquering Bear, sparking the First Sioux War.

In 1909, Indianapolis Motor Speedway hosted its first automobile race.

In 1934, German voters approved the vesting of sole executive power in Adolf Hitler.

In 1955, torrential rains caused by Hurricane Diane resulted in severe flooding in the northeastern U.S., claiming some 200 lives.

In 1960, a tribunal in Moscow convicted American U2 pilot Francis Gary Powers of espionage. (Although sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment, Powers was returned to the United States in 1962 as part of a prisoner exchange.)

In 1980, 301 people aboard Saudia Flight 163 died as the jetliner made a fiery emergency return to the Riyadh airport.

In 2013, South African sprinter Oscar Pistorius was indicted in Pretoria, South Africa, on charges of murder and illegal possession of ammunition for the shooting death of his girlfriend, Reeva Steenkamp, at his home on Valentine's Day 2013; Pistorius maintained he'd mistaken her for an intruder. (Pistorius would be found guilty of murder and sentenced to prison; he was released on parole in January 2024.)

Today's Birthdays: Former tennis player & coach Renee Richards is 90. Actor Jill St. John is 84. Author Jack Canfield is 80. Rock singer Ian Gillan (Deep Purple) is 79. Former President Bill Clinton is 78. Actor Gerald McRaney is 77. Actor Jim Carter ("Downton Abbey") is 76. Former First Lady Tipper Gore is 76. Rock bassist John Deacon (Queen) is 73. Actor-director Jonathan Frakes is 72. Political consultant Mary Matalin is 71. Actor Peter Gallagher is 69. Actor Adam Arkin is 68. Actor Martin Donovan is 67. Football Hall of Famer Anthony Munoz is 66. Musician Ivan Neville is 65. Football Hall of Famer Morten Andersen is 64. Actor John Stamos is 61. Actor Kyra Sedgwick is 59. Actor Kevin Dillon is 59. Country singer Lee Ann Womack is 58. Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella is 57. Country singer Clay Walker is 55. Rapper Fat Joe is 54. Olympic gold medal tennis player Mary Joe Fernandez is 53. Actor Erika Christensen is 42. Actor Melissa Fumero is 42. Olympic gold medal snowboarder Lindsey Jacobellis (jay-kuh-BEHL'-ihs) is 39. Author Veronica Roth is 36. Rapper-TV personality Romeo is 35. Actor Ethan Cutkosky (TV: "Shameless") is 25.