

Groton Daily Independent

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Saturday, Sept. 7

C Volleyball at Matchbox Club, Aberdeen.

Soccer at West Central: Girls at noon, boys at 1:30 p.m.

Airport Fly-In/Drive-In, municipal airport, all day.

Citywide rummage sale, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Common Centers Community Thrift Store open, 209 N Main, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

3rd/4th and 5th/6th Football @ Mobridge Jam-boree

Sunday, Sept. 8

Fellowship of Christian Students (FCS), 3:16 pm in GHS Conference Room

Emmanuel Lutheran: Rally Sunday: Worship, 9 a.m.; Sunday School, 10:15 a.m.; Choir, 6 p.m.

Airport Fly-In/Drive-In, municipal airport, all day.

Couples Sunflower Golf Tourney, 10 a.m.

Doggie Day at the pool, 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Carnival of Silver Skates registration, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Skating House

St. John's Lutheran: Worship at St. John's, 9 a.m.; at Zion, 11 a.m.; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.

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

First Presbyterian Church: Bible Study, 9:30 a.m.; Worship, 11 a.m.

Groton CM&A: Sunday School, 9:15 a.m.; worship, 10:30 a.m.

United Methodist: Worship with communion: Conde Worship, 8:30 a.m.; Groton worship, 10:30 a.m.; Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.

Monday, Sept. 9

School Breakfast: French toast.

School Lunch: Meatball, mashed potatoes.

Senior Menu: Baked fish, oven roasted potatoes, pea and cheese salad, fruit, whole wheat bread.

JH/JV Football at Langford Area vs. Webster Area. JH at 4 p.m., JV at 5 p.m.

School Board Meeting, 7 p.m.

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

Pantry Open, community center, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Senior Citizens meet at the community center, 1 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Carnival of Silver Skates registration, after school to 6 p.m., Skating House

United Methodist: PEO Meeting (outside group), 7 p.m.

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Groton Daily Independent
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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.

Summer Hiring Slowdown

US employers added 142,000 nonfarm jobs in August, fewer than the 161,000 jobs economists had anticipated, according to government data released yesterday. The US Bureau of Labor Statistics also revised the number of jobs added in June and July; June was revised down to 118,000 jobs from 179,000, while July was revised down to 89,000 jobs from 114,000.

Most of the jobs were added in construction (34,000) and healthcare (31,000). The unemployment rate fell to an expected 4.2% in August from 4.3% in July. Average hourly earnings in August rose 0.4% month-over-month and 3.8% year-over-year, both higher than economist estimates.

Analysts say the data show the Federal Reserve could cut interest rates by at least a quarter-percentage point at its next two-day policy meeting from Sept. 17-18. The Federal Reserve's benchmark federal funds rate has been at a range between 5.25% and 5.5% since July 2023.

Judge delays Trump's hush money sentencing until after election.

A New York judge postponed former President Donald Trump's sentencing in his hush money trial to Nov. 26. Sentencing had previously been set for Sept. 18. In May, Trump was found guilty of falsifying business records to cover up payments made to adult film star Stormy Daniels in the lead-up to the 2016 election. The judge is also weighing a request from the defense to overturn the verdict following the Supreme Court's July ruling on presidential immunity.

Israel appears to end 10-day raid in West Bank city of Jenin.

At least 39 Palestinians were killed during Israel's military operation in the West Bank, with 21 from Jenin, according to the Palestinian Health Ministry. A 26-year-old Turkish-American woman, who had been protesting against Israeli settlers in the West Bank, was also reportedly fatally shot by Israeli forces. Over 600 people have been killed in the West Bank this year, per the United Nations. See updates on the war here.

Ex-mafia hitman sentenced to 25 years in death of Boston mobster.

Fotios Geas, 57, who was already serving a life sentence in federal prison for other crimes, was convicted Friday of beating to death 89-year-old Boston mobster James "Whitey" Bulger in his cell in 2018 as two other inmates served as lookouts. Geas was the last of the three men to be sentenced for the murder. Bulger ran a largely Irish gang in the '70s and '80s and later became one of the FBI's 10 most-wanted fugitives after being on the run (see more). He was caught in 2011.

Pterosaur fossils shed light on massive reptile's ability to fly.

Paleontologists found three-dimensional fossils of two different large-bodied pterosaur species dating back roughly 72 million to 66 million years. The remains reveal the wing bones of the *Arambourgiania philadelphiae* species are similar to those of modern-day vultures, while the wing bones of the *Inabtanin alarabia* species are similar to modern-day flapping birds. See a 101 on flight patterns here.

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UK watchdog finds Google's ad tech practices harm competition.

The UK Competition and Markets Authority accused Google of breaking competition laws by abusing its dominance in online display advertising to favor its own services. Publishers and advertisers rely on Google's tools to bid on and sell advertising space on websites and apps. See the CMA's allegations here. Google is also under investigation by the US Justice Department and European Commission.

Japanese 7-Eleven owner rejects \$38.5B takeover bid.

Canada's Alimentation Couche-Tard, which owns international convenience chains like Circle K, had offered to buy retail giant Seven & i Holdings in an all-cash deal. Had the offer been accepted, it would have been the largest-ever foreign buyout of a Japanese company. Seven & i Holdings said the deal would have faced antitrust challenges in the US and was not in the best interest of shareholders. Seven & i Holdings also said it was open to further negotiations.

Humankind(ness)

Today, we're sharing a story from reader Lisa E. in The Woodlands, Texas.

"Even though summer is over, the managing partners at my daughter's company just decided to let their recent college-graduate summer interns keep their jobs until they find new positions. They want to ensure they have a paycheck while job hunting, and they even gave them titles to go with their job descriptions to help improve their resumes."

GDILIVE.COM

Groton Area
Tigers
GT

Text Paul at
605-397-7460

Any interest in any of
these basketball games on
GDILIVE.COM?
They are \$25 each.

Sisseton Volleyball C
Webster Area Volleyball C
Webster Area Volleyball JV
Aberdeen Roncalli Volleyball C
~~Aberdeen Roncalli Volleyball JV~~
Clark/Willow Lake Volleyball C
Clark/Willow Lake Volleyball JV
Warner Volleyball C
~~Warner Volleyball JV~~
Tiospa Zina Volleyball C
Tiospa Zina Volleyball JV
Florence/Henry Volleyball C
Florence/Henry Volleyball JV

Informational Meeting

Never in 135 years of statehood has a law jeopardized people's Property Rights & Local Control like RL 21

Open Forum

Mon. Sept 9, 2024

6:30 pm Meeting

Ramkota

1400 8TH Ave NW Aberdeen, SD

Speakers:

Curtis Jundt - 40 yr pipeline engineer

Rep Julie Auch: District 18 Rep Jim Eschenbaum: Chair of RL 21

Former Speaker Spencer Gosch District 23

Sen Elect Mark Lapka District 23

Ed Fischbach - Spink County Farmer

Contact for more info:

Jodi Waltman: 605-216-8171

"Pie Auction Fundraiser"

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The Tiger fans clustered together in the far side bleachers behind their team. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

Tiger gridiron goes 2-0 with defensive win over Webster Area

Groton Area's football team defeated Webster Area in a defensive game all the way to the end, 14-7.

"It's always a battle when we play Webster," said Coach Shaun Wanner. "The last three or four years have been close games and this was no exception."

There were only two first downs in the first quarter. Webster's first possession was stopped by a Christian Ehresmann interception, but then Groton's first possession went from second and 14 to third and 28 and fourth and 41 with two big sacks by Webster Area. Webster Area got a first down on its next drive but then ended up punting on fourth and four. Groton Area did the same thing with a first down and punting on fourth and nine. Webster Area was limited to four touches of the ball before punting.

That set up Groton's next drive with 1:02 left in the first quarter. Keegen Tracy had a 20 yard punt return and the Tigers set up shop at the Webster Area 45 yard line. That drive went the distance of 45 yards in seven lays with three first downs in 3:04 before Korbin Kucker scored on an eight yard run. Joao Nunes kicked the PAT and with 9:58 left in the second quarter, Groton Area took a 7-0 lead.

Webster Area then started its drive at its own 33 yard line. One big first down was recalled due to a penalty, making it third and 22, but then Gavin Witt broke free and dashed for 79 yards after a catch from Ian Lesnar. Bradyn Small kicked the PAT and the game was tied at seven with 7:53 left in the first half. That drive had five plays, one first down and took just under two minutes.

Groton Area would start its next drive on its own 25 yard line. The Tigers had five first downs and was down to the Webster Area three yard line. The Bearcat defense put up a tough fight as Groton Area was second one, third and one and fourth and one. Ryder Johnson would then just get through the corner to score for the Tigers with 1:13 left in the half. Nunes kicked the PAT and Groton Area was back on top, 14-7. That drive went 75 yards in 14 plays with six first downs and it took six and half minutes.

Both teams had one more opportunity before the half expired.



Christian Ehresmann gains a few yards as he powers his way forward. He was given a little push by Lincoln Krause. Also pictured is Tucker Hardy (52). (Photo by Paul Kosel)

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Groton Area had two first downs on the first drive of the second half, only to have Gavin Witt intercept the ball on fourth and four with a three yard return. That set up Webster Area on its own 38 yard line. The Bearcats would gain three first downs. It was then fourth and 11 and a pass was made that was bobbled deep in Groton territory. Pass interference was called on Groton Area and the Bearcats were first and goal at the nine yard line. A couple of big defensive plays by Groton Area forced Webster Area back to fourth and 15 and the final pass was incomplete, stopping the drive.

The Tigers were deep in their own territory, starting at the 15 yard line. This possession started with 1:24 left in the third quarter and went into the fourth quarter. Groton Area had four quick first downs, one including a pass interference call on Webster Area and the Tigers were on the Webster 35 yard line. But on first and 15, Groton Area fumbled the ball and the Bearcats recovered it on their own 38 yard line. Webster Area had two first downs and ended up turning the ball over on downs on fourth and third.

Groton Area had the ball with 5:47 left in the game and started off with a penalty, making it first and 20. The Tigers ended up punting on fourth and 14 and Webster had the ball on its own 44 yard line with 4:15 left in the game. The Bearcats got a first down at the Tiger 39 yard line. It was then second and 15 and third and 20. On fourth and 20, Webster Area went for the pass that was intercepted by Ryder Johnson at the Groton Area 20 yard line. From there, it was time management for the Tigers and the game ended with a Groton Area win.

"You have to know your down and distance," Wanner said. "You know they're going to pass and fourth and 20. Ryder came over and said he should have knocked it down instead of intercepting it. By knocking it down, we would have had the ball at the 40 yard line and with the interception, we were at the 20 yard line. Everyone is happy and excited about the interception, but then you realize there is a better play. A play is play, though."

"We have to work on not having so many penalties," Wanner said. "We don't have a lot of plays when you're second and 18 or fourth and 41. It forces us to do something that we really don't want to do. Our juniors and seniors know we shouldn't be getting those penalties." When asked how do you improve on that, Wanner said, "We have this thing on Monday on getting on the line. The number of penalties we have is added on to our conditioning. It's called "Tiger Reminders." We'll clean it up." Groton Area had seven penalties for 62 yards while Webster Area had two for 25 yards. "One thing we try to do is manage the clock," Wanner said. "We try to balance the number of times we run and pass the ball. You don't want to stop the clock with incomplete passes. We need to shorten our passing attempts."

Groton Area completed seven of 13 passes for 54 yards with one interception (Ryder Johnson 7-12-54-1 Int., Korbin Kucker 0-1) compared to Webster Area's four of 15 for 109 yards and one touchdown (all by Ian Lesnar). On the ground, Groton Area carried the ball 36 times for 135 yards and two touchdowns. Webster Area carried the ball 38 times for 100 yards. Receivers for Groton Area were Brevin Fliehs with four catches for 39 yards, Keegen Tracy with two catches for 16 yards and Conner Glines with one catch for 13 yards. For Webster Area, Gavin Witt had one catch for 79 yards one one touchdown, Tate Mamenga with two catches for 26 yards and Isaac Nelson had one catch for four yards.



Korbin Kucker also breaks free, but is grabbed from behind by Webster Area's Gavin Witt. (Photo

by Paul Kosel)

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Keegen Tracy catches the kickoff and returned it 30 yards late in the first quarter.

(Photo by Paul Kosel)

Rushers for Groton Area were Korbin Kucker with 20 carries for 97 yards and one touchdown, Keegen Tracy with five carries for 43 yards, Christian Ehresmann had five carries for nine yards and Ryder Johnson had six carries for a minus 14 yards.

On the defensive side, Brevin Fliehs had 11 tackles and one fumble recovery, Christian Ehresmann had 10 tackles and one interception, Tucker Hardy had eight tackles and one sack, Cade McInerney had five tackles and one sack and Ryder Johnson had one interception. For Webster Area, Gage Baumgarn had nine tackles, Jeron McCreary and Michael Dorsett each had seven tackles, Trace Shoemaker had one fumble recovery and Gavin Witt had one interception.

It was a beautiful night for the game with the temperature in the 60s and no wind. There were no leg cramps in this game. Wanner said, "I think they're getting the point to stay hydrated. There were a lot of jars of pickle juice on the bus."

Groton Area is now 2-0 on the season while Webster Area falls to 1-2. "It's been a while since we've been 2-0," Wanner said. "Even that one year we were 7-1, we lost our first game of the season and then won the next seven. Every game is going to be a battle. By the

end of the season, we should be a solid football team.

Groton Area will travel to Milbank on Friday. "We have not played them for four or five years," Wanner said. "They have a new coaching staff and they're pretty young, but they play a competitive schedule. They lost to Tri-Valley by one one point. Tri-Valley went up from 11B to 11A this year and they're always a tough team."

The injury list has Teylor Diegel cleared to play in the next game, but Nick Morris might have to stay out another week, according to Wanner.

- Paul Kosel

Gilbert takes second at Redfield Cross Country Meet

Ryelle Gilbert took second place in the girls junior varsity meet held in Redfield. She ran the 3,000 meter course in 11:46.02. Sydney Holmes placed 35 with a time of 13:59.34.

In the boys 3K junior varsity division, Kason Oswald placed 41st with a time of 12:56.70 and Logan Clocksene placed 67 with a time of 22:06.53.

The middle school Groton Area team placed fourth in a field of 11 teams. Grayden Zeck took 13th place with a time of 7:50.44, Blake Malsam was 22nd with a time of 8:08.75 and Landon Thornton was 32nd with a time of 8:52.25.

Highmore-Harrold won the team title with 18 points followed by Northwestern with 20, North Central 26, Groton Area 51, Dupree 53, Potter County 53, Wolsey-Wessington 72, Frederick Area 73, Miller 77, Mobridge-Pollock 78 and Redfield 110.

- Paul Kosel

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GFP Commission Holds September Meeting

The South Dakota Game, Fish and Park (GFP) Commission held their monthly meeting on September 5-6 at the Outdoor Campus in Rapid City.

Wildlife Finalizations

Bobcat Hunting and Trapping Seasons

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

2024-25

Residents: December 26, 2024 – February 15, 2025; and,

Nonresidents: January 11 – February 15, 2025.

2025-26

Residents: December 26, 2025 – February 15, 2026; and,

Nonresidents: January 10 – February 15, 2026.

The Commission included a change for bobcat hunters or trappers to limit harvest to one bobcat in the Black Hills management zone. The harvest limit of one bobcat in the East River management zone and unlimited bobcats in the West River management zone remained unchanged. The Commission also clarified management zone descriptions and reporting and registration requirements for harvested bobcats.

Bait

The Commission updated scientific names for certain species of crayfish to reflect updates in taxonomic classification.

Fish Limits

The Commission changed the existing harvest regulation on Belle Fourche Reservoir to two fish daily limit with a 15-inch minimum.

Private Fish Hatcheries

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

Salmon Snagging

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

Spring Turkey

The Commission finalized the 2025 and 2026 Spring Turkey Hunting Seasons with the following dates:

2025

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

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

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

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

April 12 – 30, 2025 Access Permit Areas.

2026

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

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

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

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

April 11 – 30, 2026 Access Permit Areas.

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

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

The Commission changed the name of the unit including Aurora and Douglas counties to PST-10A from PST-18A.

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

License numbers for the 2025 and 2026 spring firearms prairie turkey hunting season units will be 7,287 resident and 318 nonresident licenses; with the Black Hills season having unlimited resident single "male turkey" licenses and 2,225 nonresident single "male turkey" licenses, and Custer State Park having 100 resident only "male turkey" licenses.

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

Wildlife and Parks Proposal

Fee Adjustment Proposal

The Department is recommending adjustments to fees within the both the Division of Parks and Recreation and the Division of Wildlife.

Some of the adjustments include:

Establish nonresident Park Entrance licenses and set fee at \$60 single and \$90 double;

Increase resident Park Entrance licenses to \$40 single and \$60 double;

Create a rule for the department to sell habitat conservation plate emblems at \$50 per vehicle set and \$30 per motorcycle;

Increase resident boat license fees by \$5 for under 19 ft motorized, \$10 19ft and over motorized, and \$3 for non-motorized;

Increase nonresident fishing licenses by \$13;

Increase resident fishing licenses by \$3;

Increase nonresident small game licenses by \$21; and,

Increase resident combination licenses by \$5.

For a complete breakdown of the proposed fee package, visit gfp.sd.gov/commission/information.

Public Comment Opportunity and Upcoming Meeting

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

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

To be included in the public record and to be considered by the Commission, public comments must include a full name and city of residence and be submitted by 11:59 p.m. CT, September 29.

The next Regular Commission Meeting will be held on October 3-4 at the Huron Convention Center.

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South Dakota State Parks Celebrates Successful Summer Season

PIERRE, S.D. – The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) celebrates yet another successful summer in South Dakota's state parks and recreation areas.

"We had an absolutely terrific summer season in our parks," said Jeff VanMeeteren, Parks and Recreation Director. "We had excellent camping numbers, individuals purchasing park entrance licenses, and anglers reeling in memories across the state."

Each season, GFP's Parks and Recreation Division hosts an annual theme and the 2024 season's is Reel in Memories.

To date, GFP has received over 1,000 submissions from over 3,000 anglers. Approximately one third of these anglers purchased a license specifically to participate in the Reel in Memories activity, many of whom were new to fishing. Additionally, 78% of participants took part in their first annual state park activity.

"Many of our parks sit on tremendous fisheries," explained VanMeeteren. "We are very excited to see existing anglers engage with our parks, new anglers join the sport, and individuals continue to add fishing to their list of activities on their camping trips."

To date, there have been 286,880 camping nights across the South Dakota state park system this year.

"We are extremely pleased with our occupancy numbers as a whole," continued VanMeeteren. "We also remind individuals, there is still plenty of great camping nights to be had."

South Dakota state parks and recreation areas remain open throughout the year, and individuals can enjoy some of the best camping nights throughout the fall season.

"Whether you're looking to set up base camp for your hunting trip, find the perfect spot for the fall bite, or just enjoy the quiet campgrounds many individuals find fall to be one of the best times of the year to camp," elaborated VanMeeteren. "Individuals also have until December 31 to submit their Reel in Memories submissions."

Additional information regarding fall camping, the Reel in Memories theme, and everything South Dakota state parks and recreation areas have to offer can be found at gfp.sd.gov/camp.

Signal Upgrade Project Scheduled to Begin on U.S. Highway 81 in Watertown

WATERTOWN, S.D. – On Wednesday, Sept. 11, 2024, a signal upgrade project is scheduled to begin at the intersection of U.S. Highway 81 and 14th Avenue North in Watertown. The project will upgrade the current signal system to include protected left turns in each direction at this intersection.

The signal work will be completed with lane closures which are anticipated to cause traffic impacts at the intersection, especially at peak travel times. Motorists are encouraged to plan accordingly or use alternate routes. Pedestrian access is planned to function as normal.

The primary contractor for this \$39,187 project is Engelstad Electric Inc., of Watertown, SD. The overall project completion date is Friday, Nov. 1, 2024.

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

September 10, 2024 8:45 A.M.

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

1. Call To Order - Pledge of Allegiance
2. Approval of Agenda
3. Opportunity of Public Comment
4. Rachel Kippley – Fair/Fairgrounds/Parks Manager
 - a. General Fair Update
 - b. Discuss Surplus Sale Items
5. Consent Calendar
 - a. Approval of General Meeting Minutes of September 3, 2024
 - b. Claims/Payroll
 - c. HR Report
 - d. Travel Request
 - e. Landfill Tonnage Report
 - f. Lease Agreement
6. Other Business
7. Executive Session (if requested per SDCL 1-25-2)
8. Adjourn

Brown County Commission Meeting

Please join my meeting from your computer, tablet, or smartphone.

<https://meet.goto.com/BrCoCommission>

You can also dial in using your phone. United States: [+1 \(872\) 240-3311](tel:+18722403311)

Access Code: 601-168-909 #

Get the app now and be ready when your first meeting starts: <https://meet.goto.com/install>

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

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

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

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

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

NO COMMISSION MEETING WILL BE HELD ON TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17TH

DUE TO STATEWIDE COUNTY CONVENTION

Name Released in Butte County Fatal Crash

What: Two vehicle fatal crash

Where: US Highway 212, mile marker 24, 10 miles east of Belle Fourche, SD

When: 8:05 a.m., Monday, September 2, 2024

Vehicle 1: 2019 Ford F350

Driver 1: 16-year-old male from Rapid City, SD, minor injuries

Seatbelt Use: Yes

Vehicle 2: 2014 GMC Sierra

Driver 2: George F. Leach, 85-year-old male from Belle Fourche, fatal injuries

Seatbelt Use: Yes

Butte County, S.D.- An 85-year-old man died from injuries sustained Monday morning in a two-vehicle crash near Belle Fourche, SD.

Preliminary crash information indicates the driver of a 2019 Ford F350 was traveling westbound on US Highway 212 near mile marker 24 when the vehicle crossed into the eastbound lane and collided head-on with George F. Leach, the driver of an eastbound 2014 GMC Sierra.

The driver of the Ford was taken to a Spearfish health center with minor injuries. Mr. Leach was transported to a hospital in Rapid City with life-threatening injuries and then passed away from those injuries. Both drivers were wearing seatbelts.

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

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

Names Released in Buffalo County Fatal Crash

What: Single vehicle fatal crash

Where: SD Highway 34, mile marker 271, three miles east of Ft. Thompson, SD

When: 3:01 a.m., Sunday, September 1, 2024

Vehicle 1: 2008 Mercury Mariner

Driver 1: Micheal Richard Washechek, 38-year-old male from Harrold, SD, fatal injuries

Seatbelt Use: No

Passenger 1: Aaron Bailey Berkebile, 23-year-old male from Pierre, SD, life-threatening injuries

Seatbelt Use: No

Buffalo County, S.D.- A 38-year-old man died and a passenger sustained life-threatening injuries Sunday, September 1, in a single vehicle crash near Ft. Thompson, SD.

Preliminary crash information indicates Micheal R. Washechek, the driver of a 2008 Mercury Mariner SUV, was traveling westbound on SD Highway 34 near mile marker 271 when the vehicle left the roadway where it vaulted over a driveway approach and crashed in the south ditch. A passenger, Aaron B. Berkebile, sustained life-threatening injuries. Washechek was pronounced deceased on scene. Both occupants were not wearing seatbelts.

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

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

We the People

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



By David Adler

Compelling Reasons to Impose Term Limits on Supreme Court Justices

Plummeting public approval of the U.S. Supreme Court, now at record lows, reflects in part deep-seated concerns about recent rulings that have overturned precedents that protected fundamental rights, as well as an unprecedented ruling—the creation of presidential immunity from criminal prosecution—without foundation in our constitutional architecture. It is also true that the diminished confidence of the citizenry in the nation's highest bench is a function of the ethical lapses of some current Justices. These factors, among others, have accelerated the gathering force of calls for the imposition of term limits on the Supreme Court.

Such proposals are not new, and they are not the exclusive property of either the Right or the Left. Indeed, scholars and commentators representing various platforms have been urging term limits for Justices for at least the past quarter-century. What's different at this juncture, is the chorus of demands for limits emanating from rank-and-file Americans. Beyond that, legislation to limit the years of the Justices has been introduced in Congress and may be considered for further discussion, debate and hearings after the November election. President Joe Biden has endorsed the concept, and various commissions have put forth proposals for term limits.

The idea, as they say, is one whose time has come. Before considering the merits of the concept, let's sweep away some confusion. First, the moniker, "term limits," is a little misleading. The essence of current proposals is not to amend the Constitution, but rather to enact a statute to emphasize "case assignments" for Justices. Justices will serve a fixed term of 18 years on the High Bench, after which they will become a "senior justice." In this capacity, they would continue to serve as Article III judges, enjoying the same salary and benefits which, the Constitution provides, cannot be "diminished during their Continuance in Office," but they would be assigned to lower federal courts and would carry out the duties assigned to them by the active justices. Some Supreme Court Justices—David Souter and Sandra Day O'Connor, for example—volunteered as senior Article III Justices after retiring from the Supreme Court.

Congress, under Article III, section 2, and blessed with approval by the Supreme Court in *Stuart v. Laird* (1803), possesses broad statutory authority, exercised since the founding period, to regulate the Court's appellate function "with such Exceptions, and under such Regulations as the Congress shall make." Thus, Congress may limit to 18 years the automatic participation of the justices in appellate cases.

Why 18 years? That is the average length of service on the Supreme Court since the founding period, and it is plenty long for a single justice to exert power which, increasingly, lacks accountability. For Justices appointed since 1990, however, the average is 26 years and climbing. The concern with too many years of service in any governmental position, which was the driving rationale behind Republicans' enthusiasm for the 22nd Amendment that limits presidents to two terms, is the aggrandizement of power, arrogance and lack of accountability.

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Near the end of his second term as president, Thomas Jefferson was urged to seek a third term. He declined because, like George Washington, eight years in office was sufficient. He expressed concern that if the services of the president "be not fixed by the Constitution, or supplied by practice, his office, nominally for years, will, in fact, become for life." History, he said, "shows how easily that degenerates into an inheritance." Jefferson believed that a representative government, held to short periods of election, "is that which produces the greatest sum of happiness to mankind."

What Jefferson said of the presidency and republicanism in general, applies to the length of service on the Supreme Court. A notable feature in the proposal is the assurance that two seats on the Court would open up in each four-year presidential term. This levels the playing field and assures the citizenry of balance on the Court, rather than control or dominance of one party or the other. Some presidents have appointed several justices while others, like Jimmy Carter, had no appointments. The goal, always, should be to appoint men and women of stature, wisdom and experience, rather than younger nominees who might further the policies and preferences of a president for decades. This proposal faces criticisms and objections, which we shall consider next week.

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



South Dakota's top 5 campaign war chests

By STU WHITNEY

South Dakota News Watch

South Dakota Republican Sen. John Thune has the largest political war chest of any U.S. senator, topping the \$20 million mark even though he's not up for re-election until 2028.

Rep. Dusty Johnson, the state's lone congressman, ranks 18th in the U.S. House of Representatives with nearly \$5 million, despite being heavily favored in his 2024 race against Democratic challenger Sheryl Johnson.

These fundraising efforts reveal ambitions beyond the Nov. 5 election, as Thune pursues the job of Republican Senate leader in Washington and Johnson positions himself to run for South Dakota governor in 2026.

There will also be a U.S. Senate election that year because Sen. Mike Rounds' term is up, and Johnson's exit would open the U.S. House seat. That makes 2026 potentially one of the most contested and consequential cycles in recent state history.

The best way to chart the ambitions of those seeking office is to follow the money.

News Watch used Federal Elections Commission data to rank the top five political war chests in South Dakota as of the last reporting date, June 30. The rankings encompass cash-in-hand amounts from principal campaign committees and federal and state political action committees (PACs).

Campaign committees are authorized by a candidate to accept contributions and make expenditures on behalf of a political campaign. Leadership PACs are used by federal officeholders to support candidates within their political party.

The rankings do not include super PACs, which are free from the donation limits of campaign committees and standard PACs but cannot be used to directly benefit individual political campaigns.

News Watch spoke to candidates, political consultants and campaign finance experts to get a sense of what's happening behind the scenes as South Dakota officeholders envision their future beyond this November.

Below are the top five and what their fundraising says about their next moves.

Sen. John Thune

Fundraising sources:

- Friends of John Thune (campaign committee): \$18,518,498
- Heartland Values PAC (leadership PAC): \$1,385,624
- Commonsense Conservative Values (leadership PAC): \$201,278
- Total: \$20,105,400

Summary:

Thune, the No. 2 Republican in the Senate, is focused on succeeding Mitch McConnell as GOP Senate leader, which would represent one of the highest political levels achieved by a South Dakotan.

Former Democratic Sen. Tom Daschle served as both minority leader and majority leader before being ousted from the Senate by Thune in a landmark 2004 election.

"Members of leadership have dual motivation to advance their party and raise their own status within the party," said researcher Andrew Mayersohn of Open Secrets, a government transparency group that tracks money in politics. "They have two good reasons to raise massive sums of money, more than what an ordinary senator might raise."

As McConnell's right-hand man as minority whip, Thune is well-positioned to win the job over fellow contenders Sens. John Cornyn of Texas and Rick Scott of Florida. The next leader will be chosen by secret

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ballot among the caucus of Republican senators on Nov. 13, the week after the election.

The ability to raise money for fellow Republicans as the party seeks to regain control of the Senate is a prerequisite for the leadership position, and Thune has been active in that regard.

In addition to his Friends of John Thune campaign committee, which ranks first among U.S. senators with \$18.5 million, the 63-year-old Murdo native is tied to New Heights Action, a super PAC established to boost Senate Republicans by funding travel and events.

New Heights Action raised and spent more than \$3 million last quarter, including \$1 million from Republican mega-donor Stephen Schwarzman, chairman and CEO of the Blackstone Group, a global private equity firm.

Thune has attended fundraisers for Senate candidates such as Dave McCormick of Pennsylvania, Bernie Moreno of Ohio, Eric Hovde of Wisconsin and Sam Brown of Nevada, all nonincumbents seeking to flip seats in battleground states.

His interest lies in not only seizing the Senate majority but earning the votes of those candidates for leader if they win their races and become new members.

Rep. Dusty Johnson

Fundraising sources:

- Friends of Dusty Johnson (campaign committee): \$4,665,427
- Dakota Leadership PAC (federal): \$169,738
- Dusty PAC (statewide): \$98,795
- Total: \$4,933,960

Summary:

It's been a poorly kept secret for nearly two years in state political circles that Johnson is running for governor in 2026 while staying focused on his House re-election race this November.

The 47-year-old Pierre native has tried to position himself as the clear Republican choice to succeed Gov. Kristi Noem by hitting up major in-state donors and conducting private polling to show he has the edge on potential rivals.

Johnson's campaign committee total of more than \$4.6 million puts him 18th among current U.S. Congress members. That's unusually high for a South Dakotan whose re-election race is deemed "solid Republican" by nearly every national prognosticator.

The campaign fund has doubled since January 2023, reflecting a robust 18 months of fundraising activity.

Notable individuals donating the per-election maximum of \$3,300 include POET CEO Jeff Broin and his wife, Tammie; former rail executive and ex-South Dakota Board of Regents member Kevin Schieffer; orthopedic surgeon and former state legislator Blake Curd; and Sioux Falls businessmen such as Tom Everist, Paul Schock, Steve Kirby and Dick Sweetman.

Johnson, a former adviser to Govs. Rounds and Dennis Daugaard who was elected to the Public Utilities Commission at age 28, hopes to solidify support among these and other key donors not just for campaign cash but to discourage challengers by seizing the mantle of front-runner.

Still, there are potential roadblocks in a state where Republican sentiments are trending more toward Donald Trump-style populism than Johnson's conventional GOP approach, which focuses on budget austerity, rural economic development and agricultural trade.

The fact that former Rapid City state legislator Taffy Howard drew 41% of the 2022 primary vote by blasting Johnson as soft on issues such as border security and election integrity was a warning sign – and perhaps an opportunity for someone to fill the hard-right lane in the gubernatorial race.

"I'm never going to be scared of a primary," Dusty Johnson told News Watch last fall. "Anybody who thinks that by acting in a certain way they can gain a free pass doesn't understand modern politics. At some point, you just go do the right thing and figure out what that means politically later."

If Amendment H passes in November, bringing top-two open primaries to South Dakota, that could make Johnson less vulnerable to the vagaries of his own party. Another factor is the future of Noem, who would hand the reins to Lt. Gov. Larry Rhoden in the hypothetical scenario of Trump winning the presidency and

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offering Noem a job in his administration.

That would make 65-year-old Rhoden the incumbent and potentially a more formidable foe, though not one feared by Johnson. True to his reputation as a lifetime political junkie, the third-term congressman has envisioned and gamed out all possible scenarios and has ample cash on hand to put his plans in motion.

Gov. Kristi Noem

Fundraising sources:

- Kristi for Governor (campaign committee): \$2,141,641
- Kristi PAC (leadership PAC): \$932,768
- Total: \$3,074,409

Summary:

Despite being a lame-duck governor whose term expires in 2026, Noem still had more than \$2 million in her campaign committee and nearly \$1 million in her leadership PAC as of the last reporting date.

That means she can mobilize quickly to run for another office if needed. But the uncertainty of her immediate future – complicated by a damaged political brand after her ill-fated book launch – makes her a wildcard in South Dakota politics.

Noem's goal to become Trump's vice presidential nominee was dashed after negative reaction to her book, "No Going Back," including revelations about Noem killing an unruly family hunting dog and seemingly fabricating a meeting with North Korean dictator Kim Jong Un.

But Trump has not totally cast her aside, and informal Noem adviser Corey Lewandowski is back on the Trump campaign team. Conventional wisdom has the governor looking for an exit ramp that a Republican presidency could provide.

If Trump loses, things really get interesting.

As one political insider put it, "when the music stops, (Noem) is going to have to find a chair." The most logical campaign path would be seeking Rounds' Senate seat in 2026.

In a traditional GOP primary format, she could run to the right of Rounds and probably get Trump's endorsement, which combined with her war chest and political savvy would be a lot for Rounds to overcome.

But if the open primary amendment passes, Rounds would likely face Noem in a top-two general election fight. That's more to his advantage as Democratic and independent voters would join Republicans in choosing between Noem and an incumbent senator who has distinguished himself on veterans issues and distanced himself from MAGA-style rhetoric.

The other question is whether Noem still has her fastball as a political force in South Dakota after criticism and mockery of her book launch came from all sides of the political and media spectrum.

In a May poll co-sponsored by News Watch, nearly two-thirds of South Dakotans said the governor damaged her credibility, and nearly half said they have an unfavorable view of the second-term Republican.

Sen. Mike Rounds

Fundraising sources:

- Rounds for Senate (campaign committee): \$1,619,386
- Peter Norbeck Leadership PAC (leadership PAC): \$419,536
- Total: \$2,038,922

Summary:

Rounds doesn't have nearly the financial muscle of Thune because he's not involved in the Senate leadership fight and wasn't seriously challenged in his last primary or general election in 2020.

Rounds has \$1.6 million in his campaign committee fund, with maximum individual donations coming from Blackstone CEO Schwarzman and his wife, Christine. Such donations are not unique for the Wall Street executive, who gave more than \$35 million to GOP congressional candidates in 2022.

Rounds' Peter Norbeck Leadership PAC disbursed more than \$230,000 over the past 18 months to support the National Republican Senatorial Committee and Republicans in key Senate races, including Tim Sheehy of Montana, who is seeking to oust Democratic incumbent Sen. Jon Tester.

Rounds will need to elevate his own campaign fund and reinvigorate in-state support if he plans to fight

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for his Senate seat in what could be a competitive race. In 2020, he cruised through the GOP primary and defeated Democratic challenger Dan Ahlers with 66% of the vote in the general.

There has also been speculation that Rounds would consider running for governor as a means of returning home to Pierre, where he served as a state legislator and was South Dakota governor from 2003-2011.

But the 69-year-old, whose wife, Jean, died of cancer in 2021, has embraced his role in the Senate serving on Armed Services, Banking and Indian Affairs committees. He might be further motivated to stay if Republicans regain the majority and fellow South Dakotan Thune takes over as leader.

Attorney General Marty Jackley

Fundraising source: Marty Jackley for Attorney General (campaign committee): \$392,230

Summary:

South Dakota Attorney General Marty Jackley, who ran a competitive but unsuccessful gubernatorial primary against Noem in 2018, is strongly considering taking another run at the job in 2026.

His campaign committee total of about \$400,000 pales in comparison to Dusty Johnson's \$5 million, a source of consternation but not panic for the 53-year-old Sturgis native who previously served as South Dakota's U.S. attorney.

"I'm focused on being attorney general," Jackley told News Watch. "Other politicians may raise money and campaign (early), but I have a busy job. And I think the best politics that I can do is to perform in that job the best I can. I've shown that I can raise money in a short period of time, and it's primarily local money. I'm not going to be controlled by anybody."

Jackley's campaign raised about \$2 million for his 2018 primary battle with Noem, which ended with her drawing 56% of the vote. He was elected in 2022 to serve a fourth term as attorney general, running unopposed in the general election.

The consensus is that Jackley would need at least \$1 million in campaign cash to challenge Johnson in a traditional primary and that it's a reachable number.

Jackley's strident stances opposing abortion and supporting gun ownership have endeared him to South Dakota's ultraconservatives, some of whom are less convinced of Johnson's devotion to the cause.

In the 2022 primary, Howard attacked Johnson for voting to block Trump's national emergency declaration for the Southern border in 2019 and Johnson's opposition to stripping Wyoming's Liz Cheney, one of Trump's harshest GOP critics, of her House leadership position. Cheney was later defeated in her 2022 House primary by more than 37 points.

If the open primary constitutional amendment passes, a potential one-on-one battle between Johnson and Jackley would be decided by the general electorate, which would favor a well-run, well-funded establishment campaign.

One year away from ads being placed for a much-awaited governor's race, financial statements point toward Johnson having an edge. But despite his early efforts, the cycle has not yet begun.

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



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COMMENTARY

After Sioux Falls tragedy, let's imagine a world where guns are safely stored

by KEVIN WOSTER

SEPTEMBER 7, 2024 7:00 AM

Imagine leaving a gun in an unlocked vehicle. Imagine that gun is stolen and ends up shooting a kid. Killing a kid.

It's more than an exercise in imagining. It happens. It just did in Sioux Falls.

Unsecured guns are dangerous. Unsecured guns can kill.

That was my wife's main message when she addressed the Rapid City Council at its Aug. 19 meeting, speaking on behalf of Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America on the need to promote safe handling and secure storage of firearms.

Without safe gun handling and storage, terrible things can and do happen.

A few hours after my wife made that point to the council here in Rapid City, it was exemplified in the most tragic of ways across the state in the state's largest city, when a teenager was fatally shot with a 9 mm handgun that had been stolen from an unlocked vehicle the previous week.

Investigators are still unraveling the details of what happened around 2:30 a.m. Central time Aug. 20, when the handgun went off in a Sioux Falls home striking 17-year-old Deontaé Boehrns in the face. He died at a Sioux Falls hospital.

A 33-year-old woman and her 13-year-old son were arrested in the case. The woman faces multiple charges, including accessory to manslaughter. It appears that a group of minors had gathered at the home, and that the 13-year-old was handling the gun when Boehrns was shot.

However the case plays out and whatever the exact details, it's another example of the horrid potential of guns that aren't stored securely.

Which is exactly what took my wife, Mary, and several other volunteers for Moms Demand Action, a



Kyle Rasmusson of First Stop Guns in Rapid City gives tips on safe gun-storage devices and techniques to Moms Demand Action members, from left, Rachel Lindvall, Donna Robinson, Mary Garrigan, Diane Grant, Chris Coleman and Karen Pettigrew. (Kevin

Woster/For South Dakota Searchlight)

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grassroots-volunteer arm of the national nonprofit Everytown for Gun Safety, to the Rapid City Council to continue their work to prevent gun violence.

"One proven risk-reduction step to prevent gun violence that adults can take is secure gun storage," Mary said. "Secure gun storage prevents kids and other unauthorized users from accessing guns. This makes our homes, communities and schools safer."

My wife spoke of the "gold standard" of secure gun storage: They should be unloaded, locked and stored separately from ammunition.

Such responsible storage saves lives. And it likely would have saved a life in Sioux Falls recently.

The message my wife brought to the council was timed just prior to the start of the new school year.

"School is starting tomorrow in Rapid City," Mary said. "And we encourage everyone to think about the risks that unsecured guns in homes and vehicles pose to kids and to our community."

With school starting across the nation, Everytown for Gun Safety and its affiliated organizations promoted Aug. 26-30 as SMART Week. SMART is an acronym encouraging people to SECURE all guns in homes and vehicles, MODEL responsible gun behavior, ASK about unsecured guns in other homes and vehicles, RECOGNIZE the role of guns in suicides and TELL friends and neighbors to be SMART.

According to data from Everytown, up to 500,000 guns are stolen each year in this nation. In 2020, more than half of gun thefts were from vehicles.

Each year, Everytown statistics say, 700 kids die by suicide with a gun. And each year since 2015, from 300 to last year's high of more than 400 kids under 18 unintentionally shot themselves or someone else.

Everytown tracks those shootings across the nation through media reports. So far this year Everytown has confirmed 168 unintentional shootings by children, 56 of them fatal.

Intentional shootings by teenagers are another potentially deadly part of the unsecured-gun problem, as shown by Wednesday's tragic shooting at a high school outside of Atlanta, Georgia.

A 14-year-old student was arrested in the case and charged with using an assault-style rifle to kill two students and two teachers. Eight more students and one teacher were hospitalized. The suspect's father was also arrested in the case for allowing his son to possess the firearm used in the mass shooting.

In June, U.S. Surgeon Vivek Murthy declared gun violence a health crisis in America. And gun violence is the nation's No. 1 cause of death for children and teens.

Careless handling and storage of firearms is an important part of that problem. Leaving firearms in an unlocked vehicle is beyond careless. It's reckless. If a firearm must be left in a vehicle, that vehicle should be locked. But even locked vehicles aren't the best option for safe gun storage, says Rapid City Police Department spokesman Brendyn Medina.

"Responsible gun ownership starts with being accountable for a firearm at all times, and a vehicle is not a gun safe," Medina said. "It is not a safe practice to leave a firearm in an unattended vehicle. It's always best practice to take firearms with you for storage in a safe location inside."

Stolen guns end up in the wrong hands, which can lead to unintended shootings or more criminal activities.

"Gun thefts are highly concerning for law enforcement," Medina said. "In most cases, stolen firearms are not recovered until they're associated with another criminal act."

The link between stolen guns and more serious crimes was shown in Rapid City eight years ago, when three guns stolen from a Rapid City business were recovered in Colorado from suspects involved in serious crimes.

One of the stolen guns was taken from a suspect killed in an officer-involved shooting, after the suspect was involved in a carjacking and high-speed chase in Aurora, Colorado. The other two were recovered after a murder suspect was arrested following a standoff in a Lakewood, Colorado, motel.

Wherever and however guns are stolen, they end up in the wrong hands with lethal potential.

RCPD uses public-information work to help reduce gun thefts from vehicles in the city. In 2022, 85 guns were reported stolen from unlocked vehicles. With the public-information campaign in 2023 that number dropped to 48 for the year and sits at 17 so far in 2024.

So public-information work can make a difference, whether it comes from professionals like those with

the RCPD or volunteers like my wife and the millions of others like her across the nation. It can lead to more responsible gun storage, in homes and vehicles. It can prevent gun thefts or unauthorized use. It can save lives.

And that's something we'd all rather imagine.

Kevin Woster grew up on a farm near Reliance and worked for decades as a journalist, including stops at the Brookings Register, Sioux Falls Argus Leader, Rapid City Journal, KELO-TV and South Dakota Public Broadcasting, plus freelance assignments for outdoors and agricultural magazines. He lives in Rapid City.

Combat sports commission wants authority to oversee bare-knuckle fights

Promoter of event in Sturgis voluntarily sought sanction from Wyoming

BY: JOHN HULT - SEPTEMBER 6, 2024 4:35 PM

The South Dakota Athletic Commission wants lawmakers to give its members the authority to oversee bare-knuckle boxing in light of a Sturgis Motorcycle Rally event last month.

The commission was established in 2014 to oversee boxing, kick-boxing and mixed martial arts events. Promoters follow rules on insurance, medical staff and safety, and must pay a fee to the commission to fund its regulatory operations.

None of the combat sport categories listed in the law can hold events in South Dakota without sanctioning by the commission and adherence to its rules.

But the law doesn't cover all combat sports.



Taylor Starling lands a punch on Britain Hart during a bout at the Buffalo Chip Campground in Sturgis during the 2024 Sturgis Motorcycle Rally. (Courtesy of Sturgis Buffalo Chip)

Attorney general: No authority without gloves

Last year, commissioners heard from an organization that aimed to hold a slap-boxing event in South Dakota. But an attorney general's opinion on the matter, issued in August 2023, said under the language of the law that created it, the commission only has authority over fights in which fighters wear gloves and

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protective gear.

As a result, the commission proposed a bill to expand its authority. The Department of Labor, under which the commission operates, did not bring the bill forward, however.

Jennifer Stalley, the commission's executive director, said during a Friday virtual commission meeting that she's unsure why the bill languished during the 2024 session, but that she hopes to see it reintroduced.

The event in Sturgis took place Aug. 3 at the Buffalo Chip campground, a prime location for revelers at the annual motorcycle rally. Stalley said the promoter, Bare Knuckle Fighting Championship, had asked the commission to sanction the event. She had to turn them down, based on the attorney general's opinion.

The Wyoming Combat Sports Commission stepped in to sanction the event, she said. The promoter voluntarily sought the sanction of Wyoming, even though South Dakota law didn't require it to do so. The group has also signaled that it wants to come back to Sturgis next year.

That fact pattern ought to sway lawmakers, Stalley said.

"The thing that has changed is that there has now been a bare-knuckle event that was overseen by another state because we didn't have the authority to oversee it," Stalley said.

The good news, she said, is that the company involved in the Sturgis fights voluntarily sought out oversight and ran "a well-regulated event." But that might not happen with every company.

"The bad thing is, now you've shown people that this can take place without regulation," Stalley said.

Commissioners: Lack of authority could draw bad actors

Commissioners voted to support advancing a bill to the labor department that would add language on unarmed combatants to the law.

"It's already happening in the state, and it's probably going to continue happening," said Jeremy Cox, a commissioner from Bancroft.

Commissioner Chet Kilmer of Spearfish asked whether adding bare-knuckle combat would put the group in line to regulate professional contests in sports like jiu-jitsu, whose combatants don't wear gloves.

Stalley said that once the commission is authorized to regulate bare-knuckle fighting, the group could decide to exempt certain kinds of competition from regulation if it chose to.

It could also decide to flatly deny sanction for any bare-knuckle event.

"If you decided you did not want to allow bare-knuckle fighting, you would be able to say 'there is no bare knuckle fighting in South Dakota, period,'" she said.

The commission also discussed an inquiry on a possible South Dakota event from a group called Redneck Brawl. That organization promotes matches between amateur competitors, Stalley said, who wear sparring gloves to compete for cash prizes.

The use of gloves would put such fights under the commission's purview, Stalley said. But she also said it seems akin to the kind of contest the commission was established to avoid, meaning one involving "people with no experience in a ring getting into a ring and possibly getting hurt."

The commission took no action on the Redneck Brawl inquiry, as there was no formal event application, but Commissioner Kaleb Paulsen referenced it while expressing support for bare-knuckle regulatory authority.

"What's to stop an organization like Redneck Brawl from saying 'OK, the loophole is to come in and do bare knuckle,'" Paulsen said.

The Department of Labor did not immediately respond to questions on its failure to introduce the combatant bill this year, or on whether it would support a similar bill in 2025.

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

Despite opt-outs by GOP states including SD, summer kids' food program seen as success

BY: SHAUNEEN MIRANDA - SEPTEMBER 6, 2024 12:42 PM

A U.S. Department of Agriculture initiative to feed hungry kids during the long summer months is mostly winding down, with advocates calling it a success despite some hiccups — and the federal government and many states are already working to bring the permanent program back in 2025.

The Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer Program — or Summer EBT — has popped up in 37 states, the District of Columbia and multiple territories and tribal nations this year. Advocates say that despite the program's fair share of challenges, especially given its first year of implementation, the program emerged as an important resource in the fight against kids' summer hunger.

Summer EBT, also known as SUN Bucks, provides low-income families with school-aged children a grocery-buying benefit of \$120 per child. Children are automatically enrolled in Summer EBT if already enrolled in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP; Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, known as TANF; or the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations, per the USDA.

Students might also be automatically enrolled if their school offers the National School Lunch Program or School Breakfast Program and their family qualifies for free or reduced-price school meals, according to the USDA. Most states' deadlines to apply for the benefit this summer have already passed, and many have already issued the benefit for the summer months.

Allan Rodriguez, a spokesperson for the USDA, said it's too early to say just how many children have been served through the program so far this summer, but based on the participating states, territories and tribes, an estimated 21 million children are eligible to receive the benefits.



A sign noting the acceptance of electronic benefit transfer (EBT) cards that are used by state welfare departments to issue benefits is displayed at a grocery store in 2019 in Oakland, California. (Justin Sullivan/Getty Images)

'Critical support to families'

Kelsey Boone, senior child nutrition policy analyst at the Food Research & Action Center, told States Newsroom that "like any new program, there are challenges with Summer EBT."

The national nonprofit works to reduce poverty-related hunger through research, advocacy and policy solutions.

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"That has included tight implementation timelines, logistical complexities and the need to raise awareness among eligible families," Boone said.

Despite those challenges, Boone said the program is "definitely worth it" and "provides critical support to families by ensuring children have access to nutritious foods during the summer months, bridging the gap when school meals are unavailable."

Boone said "we are still in the midst of implementation, so there aren't hard statistics on how the programs are really rolling out at this point."

She added that "some states have had to return to USDA and ask for ... higher amounts of benefits, and that is due to the fact that they are streamline certifying, or automatically giving benefits to more students than they expected, and that is a very big positive for the streamlined certification process."

Boone noted that some states have been delayed in issuing the benefits, "which means some families will not be receiving benefits until September or even October or November."

Still, Boone said that despite the importance of receiving the benefits during crucial summer months when school meal programs are not an option, "it is also going to be helpful no matter what."

Over a dozen states opted out

But 13 states — all with Republican governors — chose not to partake in the program this year, including Alabama, Alaska, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Iowa, Mississippi, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas, Utah and Wyoming. Multiple tribal nations in Oklahoma are participating despite the state opting out.

Rodriguez said the department expects that even more states and tribes will provide SUN Bucks next year.

States have until Jan. 1 to submit a notice of intent if they plan to participate in Summer EBT for 2025, according to the USDA. Alabama has already allocated millions of dollars in funding for the program next summer.

"We recognize that standing up a new program in a very short time period is no easy task," Rodriguez said, adding that "potential challenges may include making systems changes, identifying sufficient staff, and securing financial resources to cover program administration, particularly (states') responsibility for covering 50% of the administrative costs associated with operating the program."

The USDA "is committed to working closely with all states, U.S. territories, and eligible tribes to support our shared goal of ensuring children have access to critical nutrition in the summer months through SUN Bucks," Rodriguez added.

Justin King, policy director at Propel — a financial technology company helping low-income Americans track Electronic Benefit Transfer balances, like Summer EBT, through an app — said "there's a lot of frustration and disappointment among folks who feel left out because their state has chosen not to participate this year."

The company, which has partnered with the Biden administration, serves more than 5 million households each month.

King said "the big takeaway from looking at Summer EBT is that while there might be inevitable hiccups and challenges, Summer EBT can work, and it does make a difference for the households that it serves."

"The comments that we've gotten from households who've received the benefit this year are overwhelmingly positive about it making a real difference in their ability to keep their kids healthy and fed in summertime."

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

Trump sentencing in New York hush money case postponed until after presidential election

BY: ASHLEY MURRAY - SEPTEMBER 6, 2024 1:19 PM

WASHINGTON — Former President Donald Trump will not face criminal sentencing in New York for his state felony convictions ahead of the November election, according to a decision released Friday by New York Judge Juan Merchan.

The New York judge said Friday the new sentencing date will be Nov. 26, according to a letter he issued Friday.

Merchan wrote that the court is "now at a place in time that is fraught with complexities," referring to the fast-approaching presidential election and the consequential U.S. Supreme Court ruling on presidential immunity that Trump's legal team has now brought to the center of the New York case.

"Adjourning decision on the motion and sentencing, if such is required, should dispel any suggestion that the Court will have issued any decision or imposed sentence either to give an advantage to, or to create a disadvantage for, any political party and/or any candidate for any office," Merchan wrote.

"This is not a decision the court makes lightly but it is the decision which in this court's view best advances the interests of justice," Merchan later concluded.

Trump, vying again for the Oval Office as the Republican nominee, is the first-ever former president to become a felon.

He was convicted on 34 counts of falsifying business records in May after a weeks-long Manhattan trial that centered on hush money payments to a porn star ahead of the 2016 presidential election.

Trump asked the New York court to delay the sentencing until after the 2024 election, arguing that the question of presidential immunity as it related to the New York conviction remains unresolved.

Friday's decision marks the second time Merchan has delayed Trump's sentencing.

Merchan delayed Trump's initial July sentencing date, just one day after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that former presidents enjoy criminal immunity for official "core constitutional" acts and at least presumptive immunity for "outer perimeter" activities, but not for personal ones.

Trump's lawyers argued the Supreme Court's presidential immunity decision nullified his New York state convictions, particularly because the evidence presented at trial could now be considered subject to immunity.

Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg agreed to a delay while the parties filed legal arguments on the issue of immunity, which Bragg ultimately argued had "no bearing" on Trump's convictions and evidence examined by the jury.



Former President Donald Trump speaks to the media as he arrives to court for his hush money trial at Manhattan Criminal Court on May 30, 2024, in New York City. (Steven Hirsch-Pool/Getty Images)

Trump, who has been entangled on several legal fronts, escalated his separate federal criminal case alleging 2020 election interference all the way to the Supreme Court, arguing presidential immunity for any criminal charges stemming from his time in office.

The case alleging Trump schemed to overturn the 2020 presidential election results was returned to federal trial court. U.S. District Judge Tanya Chutkan on Thursday released a pre-trial calendar that extends beyond this November's election.

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

Commission votes to limit bobcat trapping and nonresident turkey hunting in Black Hills

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - SEPTEMBER 6, 2024 12:31 PM

The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Commission unanimously approved a recommendation Thursday to protect bobcat numbers by limiting trappers to one per year in the Black Hills.

If approved by the Legislature's Rules Review Committee, the new rules will apply during this year and next year's seasons, and then will be reviewed. There was previously no limit on Black Hills bobcat trapping.

Estimates show the statewide bobcat population declined from 2,708 in 2017 to 1,322 in

2022. The number of bobcats in the Black Hills declined from 359 to 162 during the same period.

During the 2022-2023 season, 14 trappers in the Black Hills trapped 42 bobcats. Bobcat pelts sold for an average of \$296.83 in early 2023, which is why some trappers pursue them.

Steve Cherkas of Edgemont testified against the proposal during Thursday's commission meeting in Rapid City. He said he traps 12 to 16 bobcats annually.

"Quotas don't work," he said. "People are going to harvest any little cat."



South Dakota Wildlife Federation Executive Director Dana Rogers argues in favor of a proposal before the state Game, Fish and Parks Commission on July 11, 2024, at Good Earth State Park near Sioux Falls. (Joshua Haiar/South

Dakota Searchlight)

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Cherkas is one of the few trappers in the Black Hills who trap more than one bobcat per season. A Department of Game, Fish and Parks official said five Black Hills trappers harvested multiple bobcats during the 2022-23 season, and six harvested multiple bobcats during the 2023-24 season.

"For all intents and purposes, this main change is going to affect five to six individuals that harvested multiple cats," said Wildlife Program Administrator Andrew Norton.

Norton said if population data from the next couple of seasons show improvements, the department will consider relaxing the restrictions.

Turkey license change finalized

The commission also approved a proposal to limit nonresident spring turkey-hunting licenses in the Black Hills.

The commission previously endorsed an amended version of a South Dakota Wildlife Federation plan to cap nonresident licenses at 2,225. The existing, unlimited system awarded 3,170 of the licenses this year. Some residents have been complaining about losing opportunities to out-of-state hunters.

Multiple residents unsuccessfully argued in favor of lowering the nonresident cap even further to around 1,000, saying the currently proposed number does not do enough.

Both proposals' final stop is the South Dakota Legislature's Rules Review Committee.

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

Plan would impose \$10 million worth of fee increases on outdoor recreation

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - SEPTEMBER 6, 2024 10:31 AM

The agency that manages state parks and issues licenses for hunting and fishing has a plan to raise \$10 million of additional annual revenue from fee increases.

The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Commission unanimously endorsed the proposal Thursday during a meeting in Rapid City, but the plan requires another vote at a future meeting.

Department of Game, Fish and Parks officials cited inflation as the driving force. The last round of increases occurred in 2019.

"We understand we're reaching into people's pockets. And we're users ourselves. None of



A kayaker explores Sylvan Lake in Custer State Park. (Makenzie Huber/South Dakota Searchlight)

us want to pay any more than we have to," said Scott Simpson, deputy secretary of the Department of Game, Fish and Parks. "We feel like these adjustments are reasonable, but they also get us to where we need to be. We feel like we can make these increases last. We're hoping this is a five-year plan."

The proposal is scheduled to be finalized during the commission's Oct. 3 meeting. The public has until then to submit comments.

The proposal also includes a plan to sell outdoors-themed license plates at \$50 per vehicle and \$30 per motorcycle. That authority was included in a bill adopted during last winter's legislative session in Pierre. Revenue would be used for habitat conservation.

The higher fees apply to dozens of passes and licenses for state residents and non-residents. The size of the proposed fee increases ranges from \$1 to \$90. They include raising annual state park passes from \$36 to \$40, annual resident fishing licenses from \$28 to \$31, and resident combination hunting and fishing licenses from \$49 to \$54. Additional surcharges apply to some of the fees.

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

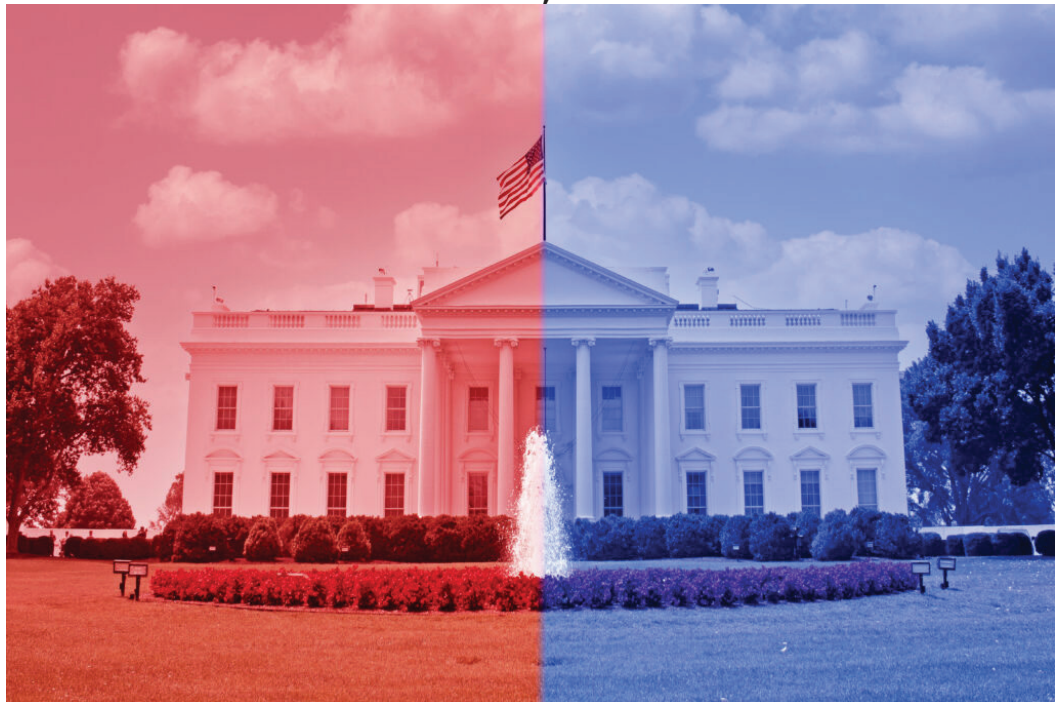
5 things to know about the Harris-Trump presidential debate

BY: SHAUNEEN MIRANDA - SEPTEMBER 6, 2024 9:00 AM

Vice President Kamala Harris and former President Donald Trump will take the stage next week in the only planned debate between the respective Democratic and GOP presidential candidates between now and November.

It's the first presidential debate since President Joe Biden bowed out of the race following his own disastrous debate performance in late June against Trump. Biden, who faced mounting calls to resign, passed the torch to Harris back in July.

The veep has embarked on an unprecedented and expedited campaign as she and Trump vie for the Oval Office. The election is just two months away.



(Getty Images)

Though the Harris and Trump campaigns clashed over debate procedures in recent weeks, both can-

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didates have agreed to the finalized rules. ABC News, host of the debate, released the rules Wednesday.

When and where is the debate?

The debate will be Tuesday, Sept. 10, at 9 p.m. Eastern time at the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The debate will be 90 minutes long and include two commercial breaks, according to ABC.

The Keystone State — where both Harris and Trump have spent a lot of time campaigning — could determine the outcome of the presidential election. The battleground state has narrowly flip-flopped in recent elections, with Biden turning Pennsylvania blue in 2020 after Trump secured a red win in 2016.

How can I watch the debate?

The debate will air live on ABC News and will also be streaming on ABC News Live, Disney+ and Hulu. ABC News' David Muir and Linsey Davis will moderate the debate.

Harris and Trump will each have two minutes to answer questions and two minutes to give rebuttals. They will also be granted one additional minute to clarify or follow up on anything.

Will the mics be muted?

Microphones will be muted when it's not a candidate's turn to speak, just like the previous debate between Biden and Trump in June.

The candidates will not give opening statements. Trump won a coin flip to determine the order of closing statements and podium placement. Trump, who selected the statement order, will give the final closing statement.

Each closing statement will be two minutes long.

Harris and Trump are not allowed to bring any props or prewritten notes to the debate stage. They will each receive a pen, a pad of paper and a water bottle.

Will there be a live audience?

There will be no live audience at the National Constitution Center, as was the case in the last presidential debate.

Harris and Trump are not permitted to interact with their campaign staff during the two commercial breaks.

Trump slams ABC ahead of debate

Trump went on the attack over the details of the debate, telling Fox News' Sean Hannity during an interview Wednesday in Pennsylvania that "ABC is the worst network in terms of fairness" and "the most dishonest network, the meanest, the nastiest."

He accused the network of releasing poor polls on purpose ahead of a previous election to drive down voter turnout.

Trump also claimed, without evidence, that Harris would get the questions in advance of the debate. ABC's debate rules state that no candidates or campaigns will receive any topics or questions ahead of the event.

Meanwhile, Democratic Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz and Ohio Republican Sen. J.D. Vance will battle it out at the vice presidential debate hosted by CBS News on Oct. 1 in New York City.

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

Patients suffer when Indian Health Service doesn't pay for outside care

BY: ARIELLE ZIONTS, KFF HEALTH NEWS AND KATHERYN HOUGHTON, KFF HEALTH NEWS - SEPTEMBER 6, 2024 7:00 AM

When the Indian Health Service can't provide medical care to Native Americans, the federal agency can refer them elsewhere. But each year, it rejects tens of thousands of requests to fund those appointments, forcing patients to go without treatment or pay daunting medical bills out of their own pockets.

In theory, Native Americans are entitled to free health care when the Indian Health Service foots the bill at its facilities or sites managed by tribes. In reality, the agency is chronically underfunded and understaffed, leading to limited medical services and leaving vast swaths of the country without easy access to care.

Its Purchased/Referred Care program aims to fill gaps by paying outside providers for services patients might be unable to get through an agency-funded clinic or hospital, such as cancer treatment or pregnancy care. But resource shortages, complex rules, and administrative fumbles severely impede access to the referral program, according to patients, elected officials, and people who work with the agency.

The Indian Health Service, part of the Department of Health and Human Services, serves about 2.6 million Native Americans and Alaska Natives.

Native Americans qualify for the referred-care program if they live on tribal land — only 13% do— or within their nation's "delivery area," which usually includes surrounding counties. Those who live in another tribe's delivery area are eligible in limited cases, while Native Americans who live beyond such borders are excluded.

Eligible patients aren't guaranteed funding or timely help, however. Some of the Indian Health Service's 170 service units exhaust their annual pool of money or reserve it for the most serious medical concerns.

Referred-care programs denied or deferred nearly \$552 million in spending for about 120,000 requests from eligible patients in fiscal year 2022.

As a result, Native Americans might forgo care, increasing the risk of death or serious illness for people with preventable or treatable medical conditions.

The problem isn't new. Federal watchdog agencies have reported concerns with the program for decades. Connie Brushbreaker, a member of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe, has been denied or waitlisted for funding at least 14 times since 2018. She said it doesn't make sense that the agency sometimes refuses to pay for treatment that will later be approved once a health problem becomes more serious and expensive.

"We try to do this preventative stuff before something gets to the point where you need surgery," said



Connie Brushbreaker, a member of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe in South Dakota, says she has been denied or wait-listed for funding to help pay for appointments outside of her local Indian Health Service hospital at least 14 times since 2018. (Matt Gade for KFF Health News)

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Brushbreaker, who lives on her tribe's reservation in South Dakota.

Many Native Americans say the U.S. government is violating its treaties with tribal nations, which often promised to provide for the health and welfare of tribes in return for their land.

"I keep having my elders here saying, 'There's treaty rights that say they're supposed to be able to provide these services to us,'" said Lyle Rutherford, a council member for the Blackfeet Nation in northwestern Montana who said he also worked at the Indian Health Service for 11 years.

Native Americans have high rates of diseases compared with the general population, and a median age of death that's 14 years younger than that of white people. Researchers who have studied the issue say many problems stem from colonization and government policies such as forcing Indigenous people into boarding schools and isolated reservations and making them give up healthy traditions, including bison hunting and religious ceremonies. They also cite an ongoing lack of health funding.

Congress budgeted nearly \$7 billion for the Indian Health Service this year, of which roughly \$1 billion is set aside for the referred-care program. A committee of tribal health and government leaders has long made funding recommendations that far exceed the agency's budget. Its latest report says the Indian Health Service needs \$63 billion to cover patients' needs for fiscal year 2026, including \$10 billion for referred care.

Brendan White, an agency spokesperson, said improving the referred-care program is a top goal of the Indian Health Service. He said about 83% of the health units it manages have been able to approve all eligible funding requests this year.

White said the agency recently improved how referred-care programs prioritize such requests and it is tackling staff shortages that can slow down the process. An estimated third of positions within the referred-care program were unfilled as of June, he said.

The Indian Health Service also recently expanded some delivery areas to include more people and is studying whether it can afford to create statewide eligibility in the Dakotas.

Jonni Kroll of the Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians of Montana doesn't qualify for the referred-care program because she lives in Deer Park, Washington, nearly 400 miles from her tribe's headquarters.

She said tying eligibility to tribal lands echoes old government policies meant to keep Indigenous people in one place, even if it means less access to jobs, education, and health care.

Kroll, 58, said she sometimes worries about the medical costs of aging. Moving to qualify for the program is unrealistic.

"We have people that live all across the nation," she said. "What do we do? Sell our homes, leave our families and our jobs?"

People applying for funding face a system so complicated that the Indian Health Service created flowcharts outlining the process.

Misty and Adam Heiden, of Mandan, North Dakota, experienced that firsthand. Their nearest Indian Health Service hospital no longer offers birthing services. So, late last year, Misty Heiden asked the referred-care program to pay for the delivery of their baby at an outside facility.

Heiden, 40, is a member of the Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate, a South Dakota-based tribe, but lives within the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's delivery area. Native Americans who live in another tribe's area, as she does, are eligible if they have close ties. Even though she is married to a Standing Rock tribal member, Heiden was deemed ineligible by hospital staff.

Now, the family has had to cut into its grocery budget to help pay off more than \$1,000 in medical debt. "It was kind of a slap in the face," Adam Heiden said.

White, the Indian Health Service spokesperson, said many providers offer educational materials to help patients understand eligibility. But the Standing Rock rules, for example, aren't fully explained in its brochure.

When patients are eligible, their needs are ranked using a medical priority list.

Connie Brushbreaker's doctor at the Indian Health Service hospital in Rosebud, South Dakota, said she needed to see an orthopedic surgeon. But hospital staffers said the unit covers only patients at imminent risk of dying.

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She said that, at one point, a worker at the referred-care program told her she could handle her pain, which was so intense she had to limit work duties and rely on her husband to put her hair in a ponytail.

"I feel like I am being tossed aside, like I do not matter," Brushbreaker wrote in an appeal letter. "I am begging you to reconsider."

The 55-year-old was eventually approved for funding and had surgery this July, two years after injuring her shoulder and four months after her referral.

Patients said they sometimes have trouble reaching referred-care departments due to staffing problems.

Patti Conica, a member of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, needed emergency care after developing a serious infection in June 2023. She said she applied for funding to cover the cost but has yet to receive a decision on her case despite repeated phone calls to referred-care staffers and in-person visits.

"I've been given the runaround," said Conica, 58, who lives in Fort Yates, North Dakota, her tribe's headquarters.

She now faces more than \$1,500 in medical bills, some of which have been turned over to a collection agency.

Tyler Tordsen, a Republican state lawmaker and member of the Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate in South Dakota, says the referred-care program needs more funding but officials could also do a "better job managing their finances."

Some service units have large amounts of leftover funding. But it's unclear how much of this money is unspent dollars versus earmarked for approved cases going through billing.

Meanwhile, more tribes are managing their health care facilities — an arrangement that still uses agency money — to try new ways to improve services.

Many also try to help patients receive outside care in other ways. That can include offering free transportation to appointments, arranging for specialists to visit reservations, or creating tribal health insurance programs.

For Brushbreaker, begging for funding "felt like I had to sell my soul to the IHS gods."

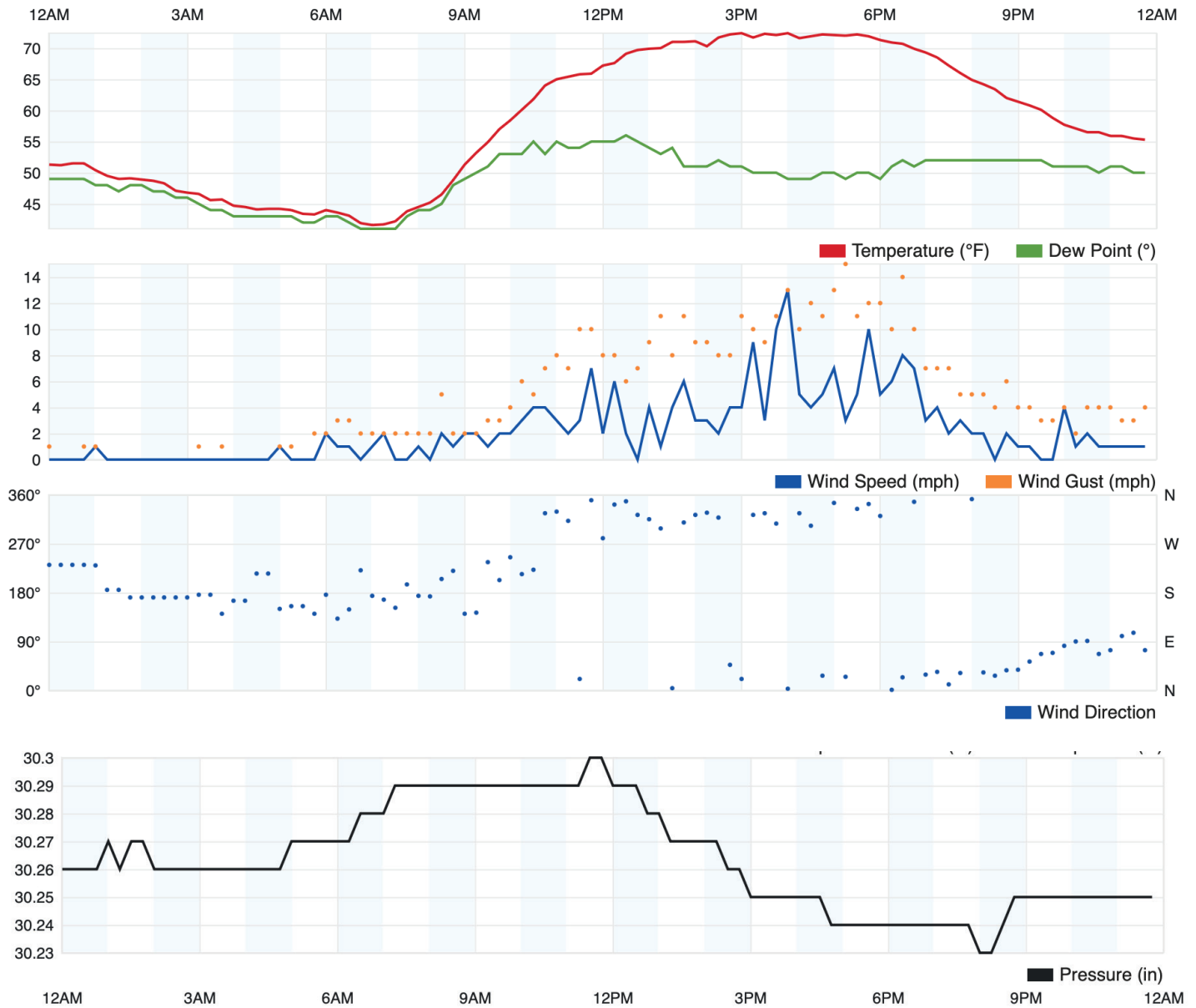
"I'm just tired of fighting the system," she said.

Arielle Zions, rural health care correspondent for KFF Health News, is based in South Dakota. She primarily covers South Dakota and its neighboring states and tribal nations. Arielle previously worked at South Dakota Public Broadcasting, where she reported on business and economic development. Before that, she was the criminal justice reporter at the Rapid City Journal and a general assignment reporter at the Nogales International, on the border of Arizona and Mexico. She graduated from Pitzer College in Claremont, California. Arielle lives in Rapid City with her cat, Sully.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today



High: 77 °F

Patchy Fog
then Sunny

Tonight



Low: 47 °F

Mostly Clear

Sunday



High: 81 °F

Sunny

Sunday Night



Low: 54 °F

Mostly Clear

Monday



High: 87 °F

Sunny

Today



Highs: 72-82°F (warmest central SD)

- Sunny skies, light south winds developing

Tonight



Lows: 45-55°F

- Passing high clouds



NWS Aberdeen, SD



Another day of dry conditions and pleasant temperatures across the region, with plenty of sunshine and highs rising into the 70s and low 80s. Light south winds will develop today as well. Hotter temperatures begin moving in on Sunday and look to stick around for a few days. Highs will bump back up into the 80s and low 90s.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 73 °F at 3:08 PM

Low Temp: 42 °F at 6:49 AM

Wind: 15 mph at 5:13 PM

Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 12 hours, 58 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 101 in 1897

Record Low: 29 in 1895

Average High: 78

Average Low: 50

Average Precip in Sept.: 0.47

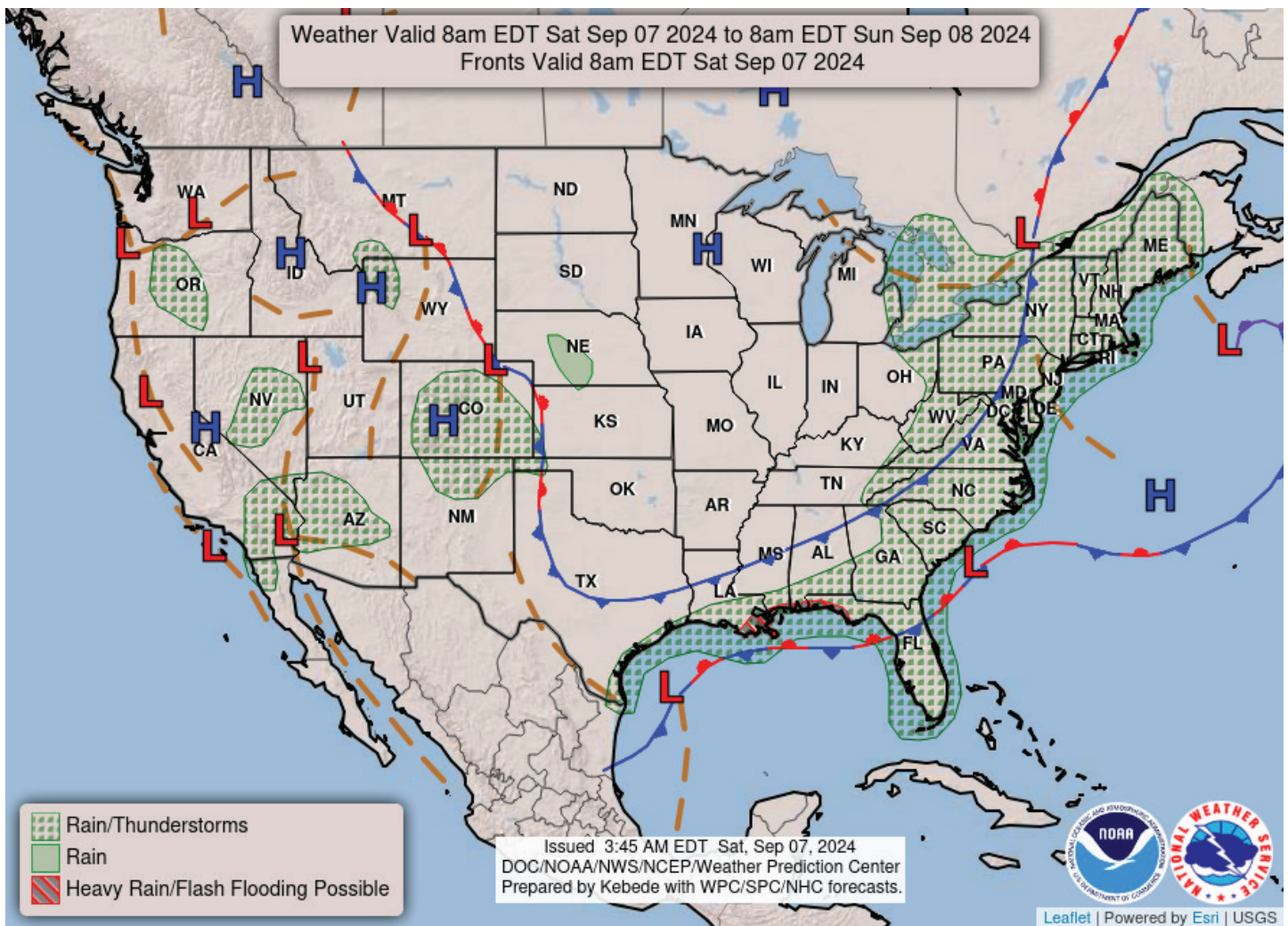
Precip to date in Sept.: 0.01

Average Precip to date: 16.81

Precip Year to Date: 19.42

Sunset Tonight: 7:59:36 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:01:53 am



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Today in Weather History

September 7, 1961: A tornado struck a farm near the McPherson-Brown county line, or about 10 miles east and 2 miles north of Leola, at around 825 pm CDT. All farm buildings were destroyed, including two chicken coops, granary, machine shop, and two trailer homes. The house was pushed about a foot off its foundation and had windows broken, plaster cracked, and part of the roof ripped. A farm truck and tractor were both blown about 500 feet and demolished. Rain up to 2.5 inches and hail accompanied the storm and caused minor damage.

1769: Considered one of the worst storms of the Eighteenth century, this hurricane passed over Williamsburg, Virginia.

1881 - The temperature soared to 101 degrees at New York City, 102 degrees at Boston MA, and 104 degrees at Washington D.C. (David Ludlum)

1888 - Much of the Middle and Northern Atlantic Coast Region experienced freezing temperatures. Killer frosts resulted in a million dollars damage to crops in Maine. (David Ludlum)

1909 - Topeka, KS, was drenched with 8.08 inches of rain in 24 hours to establish a record for that location. (6th- 7th) (The Weather Channel)

1970 - A lightning bolt struck a group of football players at Gibbs High School in Saint Petersburg FL, killing two persons and injuring 22 others. All the thirty-eight players and four coaches were knocked off their feet. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Showers and thunderstorms produced 4 to 8 inch rains in three to six hours in Virginia, with totals across the state for the Labor Day weekend ranging up to fourteen inches. The Staunton River crested at 34.44 feet at Altavista on the 8th, its highest level since 1940. Damage due to flooding was estimated at seven million dollars around Bedford, Henry, and Franklin. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Fifty cities across the eastern U.S. reported record low temperatures for the date. The low of 56 degrees at Mobile AL was their coolest reading of record for so early in the season. The mercury dipped to 31 degrees at Athens OH, and to 30 degrees at Thomas WV. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Thunderstorms in the central U.S. produced four inches of rain at Texamah overnight, and up to six inches of rain in southwestern Iowa. Evening thunderstorms in eastern Colorado produced golf ball size hail at Clear Creek and at Nederland. Late evening thunderstorms in Iowa drenched Harlan with more than four inches of rain. (The National Weather Summary)

1998: Two Derechos occurred on this day with one affecting most of Pennsylvania and New York City, the other impacting central New York.

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GOD AND THE ISSUES OF LIFE

Years ago a luxury ocean liner was making its way from England to America. Shortly after dark it encountered a massive thunderstorm and heavy seas. The ship began to heave first one way and then the other because of the enormous waves. One of the passengers sought out the captain and shouted in a loud voice, "Do something!"

"Madam, we are doing our very best," he said calmly, "and we are trusting in the providence of God."

"Is it that serious?" she asked.

The word "providence" comes from two Latin words, "care" and "preparation beforehand." For the Christian this means that before we encounter problems or pain, trials or troubles God has already made His preparation for us to be safe and secure no matter what He brings into our lives.

We must realize that God sees "things" beforehand and knows what happens to us before it actually happens. Because of His knowledge and power, He will arrange the outcome of these "things" to fulfill His purpose for our lives.

Paul certainly believed in the providence of God. In his letter to the Romans, he assures us that "God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love Him and are called by Him." If it comes into our life it is because God has a purpose and plan for it.

Prayer: Help us, Father, to trust You when days seem dark and nights seem long. May we realize and accept Your "providence" for us in everything! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. Romans 8:28

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:
09.06.24

6 23 41 59 63 25

MegaPlier: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$800,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.04.24

7 9 28 30 31 3

All Star Bonus: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$8,540,000

NEXT 11 Hrs 56 Mins
DRAW: 41 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.06.24

3 23 24 25 30 5

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT 12 Hrs 11 Mins
DRAW: 42 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.04.24

9 21 26 32 33

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$23,000

NEXT 12 Hrs 11 Mins
DRAW: 42 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.04.24

4 21 34 35 41 9

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT 12 Hrs 40 Mins
DRAW: 42 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.04.24

7 10 21 33 59 20

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$112,000,000

NEXT 12 Hrs 40 Mins
DRAW: 41 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

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News from the Associated Press

Friday's Scores

The Associated Press

PREP FOOTBALL=

Aberdeen Roncalli 21, Deuel 12

Alcester-Hudson 56, Irene-Wakonda 6

Avon 60, Burke 7

Bon Homme 50, Scotland/Menno 0

Brandon Valley 41, Rapid City Stevens 7

Britton-Hecla 48, Redfield 0

Brookings 34, Mitchell 0

Canistota 40, Iroquois-Lake Preston 0

Canton 20, Dakota Valley 13

Centerville 37, Garretson 20

Clark-Willow Lake 46, Sisseton 6

Dell Rapids 30, Madison 13

Dell Rapids St Mary 54, Arlington 0

Elk Point-Jefferson 36, Mt. Vernon/Plankinton 33

Elkton-Lake Benton 40, Freeman-Marion-FA 12

Estelline-Hendricks 30, Chester 0

Faulkton 46, Herreid-Selby 8

Flandreau 19, Parker 6

Great Plains Lutheran 36, Florence-Henry 8

Gregory 30, Platte-Geddes 26

Groton 14, Webster 7

Hamlin 50, Waubay/Summit 0

Hanson 25, DeSmet 8

Harding County 48, New Underwood 6

Hill City 55, Dupree 14

Howard 55, Deubrook 0

Lemmon High School 38, Potter County 0

Lennox 52, Custer 0

Leola-Frederick High School 40, Stanley County 8

Lower Brule 50, Crazy Horse 0

McCook Central-Montrose 20, Beresford 7

Mobridge-Pollock 50, Miller 32

Oldham-Ramona-Rutland 52, Sioux Falls Lutheran 20

Parkston 26, Kimball-White Lake 0

Philip 32, Bennett County 26

Sioux Falls Christian 41, Rapid City Christian 22

Sioux Falls Jefferson 41, Sioux Falls Roosevelt 7

Sioux Falls Lincoln 36, Sioux Falls O'Gorman 19

Sioux Valley 44, Baltic 13

Spearfish 26, Rapid City Central 22

Sturgis Brown High School 42, Douglas 0

Sunshine Bible Academy 58, Colome 12

T F Riggs High School 48, Huron 6

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TDAACDC 46, Corsica/Stickney 12
Tea 39, Aberdeen Central High School 7
Timber Lake 20, North Central 6
Tri-Valley 14, Milbank 13
Vermillion 55, Lakota Tech 0
Viborg-Hurley 42, Gayville-Volin High School 7
Wagner 27, Hot Springs 0
Wall 50, Kadoka 8
Warner 37, Ipswich 0
Watertown 27, Yankton 13
Waverly-South Shore 48, Wilmot 12
West Central 56, Belle Fourche 15
Wolsey-Wessington 28, Castlewood 8

Some high school football scores provided by Scorestream.com, <https://scorestream.com/>

Friday's Scores

The Associated Press

PREP VOLLEYBALL=

Cheyenne-Eagle Butte def. Crow Creek Tribal School, 25-15, 20-25, 20-25, 25-17, 15-13

Little Wound vs. Edgemont, canc.

Mobridge-Pollock def. Belle Fourche, 25-10, 25-10, 25-11

Gillette Tournament=

Pool A=

Cody, Wyo. def. Rapid City Central, 25-13, 25-17

Rapid City Central def. Campbell County, Wyo., 21-25, 25-12, 15-8

Rapid City Central def. Sundance High School, Wyo., 25-22, 25-13

Pool B=

Casper Kelly Walsh, Wyo. def. St Thomas More, 25-19, 25-20

Pool C=

Rapid City Christian def. Burns, Wyo., 25-15, 25-15

Rapid City Christian def. Newcastle, Wyo., 20-25, 25-23, 17-15

Thunder Basin, Wyo. def. Rapid City Christian, 25-10, 25-16

Pool D=

Rapid City Stevens def. Buffalo, Wyo., 25-20, 25-6

Rapid City Stevens def. Casper Natrona, Wyo., 25-13, 25-21

Pool E=

Douglas, Wyo. def. Spearfish, 25-21, 16-25, 15-12

Spearfish def. Cheyenne Central, Wyo., 25-13, 25-12

Spearfish def. Scottsbluff, Neb., 25-15, 25-13

Southwest Minnesota Tournament=

Chaska, Minn. def. Sioux Falls Roosevelt, 23-25, 25-22, 15-7

Some high school volleyball scores provided by Scorestream.com, <https://scorestream.com/>

Abortion rights supporters in South Dakota blast state's video of abortion laws

By JACK DURA Associated Press

A newly released, state-produced video intended to help doctors comply with South Dakota's strict abortion law isn't specific enough to ensure health care professionals don't violate the regulations and open themselves up for prosecution, a group of abortion rights supporters said Friday.

But supporters of the video, which was mandated by the Legislature and funded by taxpayers, said the roughly six-minute video posted Wednesday to YouTube is exactly what lawmakers demanded and gives clear guidance to physicians.

South Dakota outlaws abortion as a felony crime except to save the life of the mother. But a ballot measure seeks to add abortion rights to the state constitution — one of nine states that will vote on similar measures in November. The abortion rights side has prevailed in all seven states with abortion-related ballot measures since the fall of *Roe v. Wade* in 2022.

"I think it would be foolhardy for a doctor to use this video as a guide to navigating the waters of our medical landscape after the abortion ban," said Dr. Marvin Buehner, a recently retired, longtime OB/GYN. He said the video offers no guidelines or clarity and doesn't help physicians practice medicine in South Dakota.

In the video, Department of Health Secretary Melissa Magstadt talks about the law and a "non-exhaustive list of conditions that could necessitate ending a pregnancy pre-viability."

"The key for a physician to ensure they are practicing within the bounds of the law is to document their decision-making process and how that led to their recommended course of treatment," she said.

The video includes a disclaimer saying the video is not legal advice, any legal questions should be referred to an attorney, and the video and its content are not legally binding.

Supporters of the South Dakota measure say the video is political cover for anti-abortion opponents to the ballot measure. They also said the video lists exceptions and words not in the law. The secretary's video statements are meaningless, they said, because she has no legal authority, and due to the disclaimer.

"How can doctors rely on this if they're prosecuted for doing something that the video suggests they can do, and they can't use the video in their defense? It's absolutely a joke," said Nancy Turbak Berry, a lawyer and Democratic former lawmaker supporting the measure. She and Buehner held a news conference Friday about the video.

She said she senses the state is embarrassed or concerned about the abortion law's effects because the secretary's statements, "apparently trying to smooth off some of the rough edges of our extreme abortion ban," suggest things no prosecutor would agree are legal.

The video notes that its collaborators included the health department, the state attorney general's office, the American Association of Pro-Life OB/GYNs and several OB/GYNs practicing in South Dakota.

Republican state Rep. Taylor Rehfeldt, the bill's prime sponsor, said she believes the video provides clear guidance for health care providers. She called the legal disclaimer "a standard component."

"The purpose of the video is not to serve as legal advice but to ensure that providers have a clear, step-by-step process for making medical decisions in these critical situations," she said via text message.

The South Dakota ACLU opposed her bill. The video is from a "do-nothing law" that won't help anyone or even require anyone to view it, South Dakota ACLU Advocacy Manager Samantha Chapman said.

"It just exists on a website, and that's the end of the story. Unfortunately, that's not the end of the story for people who are trying to survive through South Dakota's draconian abortion ban," she said.

Abortion laws in other states have been criticized as being unclear. Earlier this year, the Texas Supreme Court upheld the state's abortion law and ruled against opponents who said the law is too vague about its medical exceptions.

In North Dakota, the former sole abortion clinic in the state and several doctors who are challenging the state's abortion ban say the law is unconstitutionally vague as to its exceptions.

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Typhoon Yagi leaves at least 4 dead and scores injured in Vietnam

By ZEN SOO and ANIRUDDHA GHOSAL Associated Press

HANOI, Vietnam (AP) — Vietnamese authorities say Typhoon Yagi has killed at least four people and injured 78 others after making landfall Saturday afternoon in the north of the country.

Yagi, described by Vietnamese meteorological officials as “one of the most powerful typhoons in the region over the past decade,” made its way to the Southeast Asian country after it left three people dead and nearly a hundred others injured in the Chinese province of Hainan.

The typhoon landed at Vietnam’s coastal provinces of Quang Ninh and Haiphong with wind speeds of up to 149 kilometers per hour (92 miles per hour), state media reported. Before landing, strong winds felled a tree, killing a woman in the capital, Hanoi, local media said Saturday.

Quang Ninh is home to the UNESCO World Heritage site Ha Long Bay, known for its many towering limestone islands. Hundreds of cruises were canceled at the popular site before the typhoon landed, according to local media. Haiphong is an industrial hub, home to large factories, including EV maker VinFast and Apple supplier Pegatron.

The typhoon has also triggered power outages in large parts of Quang Ninh and Thai Binh provinces.

Earlier, the government issued several alerts, and those vulnerable to floods or landslides were evacuated. Four airports were shuttered, including in Hanoi, and Haiphong.

Authorities pruned trees in Hanoi to make them less susceptible to falling, but wind and rain knocked over several along with billboards in northern cities. Local media reported that many moored boats were swept out to sea.

“I am going to stay inside and try and stay safe with my family,” said Bao Ngoc Cao, 24, a businesswoman from Hanoi. She added that the last time a typhoon this strong hit Vietnam was in 2013 and that storms usually weaken before reaching the capital. “But we still need to be prepared.”

On Friday afternoon, Yagi struck the Chinese city of Wenchang in Hainan province with wind speeds of up to about 245 kph (152 mph) near its center. Authorities said the typhoon left three people dead and nearly a hundred others injured in the province. It has affected over 1.2 million people as of noon Saturday, according to the local Global Times newspaper.

Some 420,000 Hainan residents were relocated before the typhoon’s landfall. Another half a million people in Guangdong province were evacuated before Yagi made a second landfall in the province’s Xuwen County on Friday night.

Meanwhile, the meteorological observatory of the city of Haikou downgraded its typhoon signal from red to orange on Saturday, as it moved further away.

Before leaving Hong Kong, Yagi forced more than 270 people to seek refuge at temporary government shelters on Friday, and over 100 flights in the city were canceled due to the typhoon. Heavy rain and strong winds felled dozens of trees, and trading on the stock market, bank services and schools were halted.

Yagi was still a storm when it blew out of the northwestern Philippines into the South China Sea on Wednesday, leaving at least 20 people dead and 26 others missing mostly in landslides and widespread flooding and affecting more than 2.3 million people in northern and central provinces.

More than 82,200 people were displaced from their homes in Philippine provinces, and classes, work, inter-island ferry services and domestic flights were disrupted for days, including in the densely populated capital region, metropolitan Manila.

Benjamin Horton, director of the Earth Observatory of Singapore said that storms like typhoon Yagi were “getting stronger due to climate change, primarily because warmer ocean waters provide more energy to fuel the storms, leading to increased wind speeds and heavier rainfall.”

Climate change was also causing storms to potentially move to different locations with studies by the observatory showing that the latitude where storms peaked in their intensity was shifting, exposing newer areas to the impacts of storms, he added.

Horton said that protecting natural systems ranging from reefs to rivers while building structures that were more resilient to strong winds and flying debris and improving existing infrastructure were all measures that could help countries better deal with strong typhoons.

Tight race for control of Congress could be decided by just a handful of campaigns

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — The race for control of Congress is as close as ever, with barely two dozen House seats and a handful in the Senate likely to determine the majority this November and whether a single party sweeps to power with the White House.

Lawmakers are returning to Washington for a three-week legislative sprint, away from the campaign trail where races have become “trench warfare” and a seat-by-seat slog. Many of the highest-profile races are being waged in Montana, New York, California and beyond, far from the presidential battleground states contested by Republican Donald Trump and Democrat Kamala Harris.

Upended by the summer shake-up that replaced President Joe Biden with Harris atop the Democratic ticket, the down-ballot campaigns enter this fall stretch at a virtual toss-up, a high-wire uncertainty where every single seat won or lost could make the difference in party control.

What’s changed is not so much the fundamentals of the individual races, but which side has the energy and enthusiasm to make sure their voters actually show up and cast their ballots, strategists said.

Money, volunteers and voter enthusiasm are flowing to the Democratic campaigns since Harris replaced Biden. That’s challenging Republicans who entered the election cycle favored for gains and buoyed by Trump’s comeback bid, despite the criminal charges hanging over his potential return to the White House.

Trump and Republicans are working feverishly to regain the momentum they enjoyed from the GOP convention in Milwaukee and from the Supreme Court decision giving former presidents broad immunity from prosecution, including for some acts related to his effort to overturn the 2020 election and for the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol.

Trump’s campaign staff held a private conference call Friday with House Republicans, assuring them that the movement is shifting to Trump as they game out strategies ahead, according to another Republican who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the closed conversation.

“There’s a lot of handwringing going on and a lot of anxiousness about where this election is headed,” said Montana Sen. Steve Daines, a Trump ally who heads the National Republican Senatorial Committee, the campaign arm.

Speaking at the Republican Jewish Coalition in Las Vegas, Daines played up GOP Senate candidates as warriors and predicted that enthusiasm from rural voters who will “crawl over broken glass” to vote for Trump will help Republicans such as Sam Brown, who is challenging Sen. Jacky Rosen, D-Nev.

Still, the fundraising gap Republicans now find themselves facing with Democrats is a problem, say GOP strategists on both ends of the Capitol, leaving them without money to keep pace with advertising and on-the-ground organizing.

“We have a lot of work to do,” Daines said.

Long gone are the days of supermajorities in the House and Senate, replaced by a new era of razor-thin margins that leave little margin for errors in political campaigns, or actual governing.

Senate heads toward 50-50 split

Democrats are almost certain to see their narrow majority slip to at least a 50-50 split with Republicans with the retirement of independent Sen. Joe Manchin of West Virginia. His departure is making way for Republican Gov. Jim Justice to handily win that seat.

Trump is wildly popular in Montana, where Senate Republicans see their best chance to go on offense as they challenge Democratic Sen. Jon Tester. But Tester is also a popular figure in the Big Sky state, where a whopping \$238 million-plus is being spent on ads.

Senate Republicans had the advantage this cycle, with few incumbents to protect, allowing them to challenge Democrats with handpicked, often wealthy recruits in Pennsylvania, Ohio and Wisconsin. Democrats have only more recently gone on offense in long-shot races against Republican Sens. Ted Cruz of Texas and Rick Scott of Florida.

But incumbents often bring longevity and name recognition to the race, making them tough to topple,

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as is the case in Pennsylvania, where Democrat Sen. Bob Casey is being challenged by Republican Dave McCormick, and in Ohio, where Sen. Sherrod Brown is running a playful cookie-eating television ad as he faces Republican Bernie Moreno.

For the open seat in Democratic-heavy Maryland, the state's popular former Republican governor, Larry Hogan, who was courted to run by Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell, is in a tough matchup against county executive Angela Alsobrooks. She would make history as one of the few Black women elected to the Senate.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., has predicted Democrats will keep their majority. In a Senate split, majority control goes to the party in the White House because the vice president can cast deciding votes.

"Democrats have never been in a stronger position to defend our Senate majority," said Michigan Sen. Gary Peters, who leads the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee.

House majority a toss-up

In the House, Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., has crisscrossed the country this summer in some 20 states as what he calls an "ambassador of hope" in his party's quest to save its razor-thin majority.

The Republicans are trying to protect 18 Republicans in Democratic-heavy congressional districts where Biden had won, particularly in coastal New York and California, and going on offense to challenge Democrats elsewhere.

But House Democrats, whose campaign chairwoman, Rep. Suzan DelBene of Washington state was among those who spoke privately to Biden about the potential down-ballot drag as he weighed his decision to exit the race, are benefiting from the Harris momentum.

Democrats are working to protect their own most embattled House lawmakers, a handful of pragmatic legislators including Marcy Kaptur in Ohio, Matt Cartwright in Pennsylvania and a trio of younger lawmakers who lead the centrist Blue Dog coalition — Mary Peltola of Alaska, Marie Gluesenkamp Perez of Washington state and Jared Golden of Maine.

Each faces a notable Republican: Nick Begich, from an Alaskan political family; Washington's Trump-endorsed Joe Kent; and former NASCAR driver Austin Theriault in Maine.

Republicans have gone to great lengths to diversify their own ranks of what just a few years ago, remained a party of mostly white men, and few women. The 2018 election, for example, left about a dozen Republican women and no Black Republicans in the House.

GOP Rep. Richard Hudson, chairman of the National Republican Congressional Committee, said House Republicans are "right where we expected to be," acknowledging it's a "trench warfare" fight.

Campaigning beyond the swing states

Because many of the House races are being contested so far from the presidential battlegrounds, candidates are being forced to stand up their own operations along with the congressional committees to turn out the vote.

House Democrats are seeing an organic flow of volunteers mobilized, having knocked on more than 377,000 doors and made more than 845,000 phone calls in August, greater than in the previous three months combined, the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee said.

House Republicans have propped up dozens of "Battle Stations" for voter outreach and get-out-the-vote efforts, particularly areas without Trump's campaign infrastructure, and also report crowds of enthusiastic voters at events as Johnson traveled the country in the contested regions.

Money woes for Republicans

Fundraising remains imbalanced as Democrats are outpacing Republicans with Harris atop the ticket, and Republicans are sounding alarms to their own donors to get off the sidelines.

"We are on track to flip the Senate," said Jason Thielman, executive director of the NRSC. But he said the Democrats' "massive cash advantage is a real problem. The biggest thing preventing Senate Republicans from having a great night in November is the cash crunch."

Both the DSCC and DSCC posted record online fundraising in the days after Harris' campaign announcement and her team sent \$25 million to down-ballot races, including \$10 million each this past week to the

House and Senate committees.

DCCC Spokesperson Viet Shelton said grassroots enthusiasm to elect a Democratic House majority is "at an all-time high." He said voters want to elect "get-stuff-done incumbents" not a "rag-tag group" of Republican candidates aligned with Trump.

Georgia school shooting suspect was troubled by a broken family, taunting at school, his father said

By RUSS BYNUM Associated Press

It was just the two of them, the teenager and his father, since an eviction a year earlier ended with the boy's parents parting ways in a separation that fractured the entire family.

That's what Colin Gray told a Georgia sheriff's investigator who came to his door in May 2023 asking whether an online threat to commit a school shooting had been posted by his son, Colt.

"I don't know anything about him saying (expletive) like that," Gray told Jackson County sheriff's investigator Daniel Miller, according to a transcript of their interview obtained by The Associated Press. "I'm going to be mad as hell if he did, and then all the guns will go away."

Now both Colt, 14, and Colin Gray, 54, are charged in the killings of two students and two teachers Wednesday at Apalachee High School in Barrow County, outside Atlanta. Nine others were hurt, seven of them shot. The Grays appeared Friday for the first time in court, where their attorneys declined to immediately seek bail.

The teen is charged with murder, and his father is accused of second-degree murder for providing his son with a semiautomatic, AR 15-style rifle used to kill children. Arrest warrants say the elder Gray did so knowing his son "was a threat to himself and others."

Jackson County authorities ended their inquiry into Colt Gray a year ago, concluding that there wasn't clear evidence to link him to a threat posted on Discord, a social media site popular with video gamers. The records from that investigation provide at least a narrow glimpse into a boy who struggled with his parents' breakup and at the middle school he attended at the time, where his father said others frequently taunted him.

"He gets flustered and under pressure. He doesn't really think straight," Colin Gray told the investigator on May 21, 2023, recalling a discussion he'd had with the boy's principal.

Shooting guns and hunting, he said, were frequent pastimes for father and son. Gray said he was encouraging the boy to be more active outdoors and spend less time playing video games on his Xbox.

When Colt Gray killed a deer months earlier, his father swelled with pride. He showed the investigator a photo on his cellphone, saying: "You see him with blood on his cheeks from shooting his first deer."

"It was just the greatest day ever," Colin Gray said.

There's no mention in the investigator's report and interview transcript of either Gray owning an assault-style rifle. Asked if his son had access to firearms, the father said yes.

But he said the guns weren't kept loaded and insisted he had emphasized safety when teaching the boy to shoot.

"He knows the seriousness of weapons and what they can do," Gray said, "and how to use them and not use them."

An eviction upended the Grays' family in summer 2022.

On July 25 of that year, a sheriff's deputy was dispatched to the rental home on a suburban cul-de-sac where Colin Gray, his wife, Colt and the boy's two younger siblings lived. A moving crew was piling their belongings in the yard.

The Jackson County deputy said in a report that the movers found guns and hunting bows in a closet in the master bedroom. They turned the weapons and ammunition over to the deputy for safekeeping, rather than leave them outside with the family's other possessions outside.

The deputy wrote that he left copies of receipt forms for the weapons on the front door so that Gray could pick them up later at the sheriff's office.

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The reason for eviction is not mentioned in the report. Colin Gray told the investigator in 2023 that he had paid his rent.

It was following the eviction, he said, that his wife left him, taking the two younger siblings with her.

Colt Gray "struggled at first with the separation and all," said the father, who worked a construction job.

"I'm the sole provider, doing high rises downtown," he told the investigator. Two days later, there was a follow-up interview with Colin Gray while he was at work. He said by phone: "I'm hanging off the top of a building. ... I've got a big crane lift going, so it's kind of noisy up here."

Middle school had also been rough for Colt Gray. He had just finished the seventh grade when Miller interviewed the father and son.

Colin Gray said the boy had just a few friends and frequently got picked on. Some students "just ridiculed him day after day after day."

"I don't want him to fight anybody, but they just keep like pinching him and touching him," Gray said. "Words are one thing, but you start touching him and that's a whole different deal. And it's just escalated to the point where like his finals were last week and that was the last thing on his mind."

The investigator also interviewed the boy, then 13, who was described in a report as quiet, calm and reserved.

He denied making any threats and said that months earlier he'd stopped using the Discord platform, where the school threat was posted. He later told his father his account had been hacked.

"The only thing I have is TikTok, but I just go on there and watch videos," the teen said.

A year before they would both end up charged in the high school shooting, Colin Gray insisted to the sheriff's investigator that his son wasn't the type to threaten violence.

"He's not a loner, Officer Miller. Don't get that," the father said, adding: "He just wants to go to school, do his own thing and he doesn't want any trouble."

Israeli strikes in Gaza kill more than a dozen as polio vaccinations continue

By WAFAA SHURAF, SAMY MAGDY and JACK JEFFERY Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — Israeli air raids in the Gaza Strip killed more than a dozen people overnight into Saturday, hospital and local authorities said, as health workers were wrapping up the second phase of an urgent polio vaccination campaign designed to prevent a large-scale outbreak in the territory.

The vaccination drive was launched after health officials confirmed the first polio case in the Palestinian enclave in 25 years, in a 10-month-old boy whose leg is now paralyzed. The nine-day campaign by the U.N. health agency and partners began last Sunday in central Gaza and aims to vaccinate 640,000 children under the age of 10, an ambitious effort during a devastating war that has destroyed Gaza's health care system and much of its infrastructure.

The second phase of vaccinations in the south was in its final day Saturday, the Gaza Health Ministry said, before moving to the north and concluding on Monday. The ministry designated dozens of vaccination points across the southern cities of Khan Younis and Rafah.

Israel, meanwhile, kept up its military offensive. In central Gaza's urban refugee camp of Nuseirat, Al-Awda Hospital said it received the bodies of nine people killed in two separate air raids. One hit a residential building early Saturday, killing four people and wounding at least 10, the hospital said, while five people were killed in a strike on a house in western Nuseirat.

Separately, Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital, central Gaza's main hospital in the town of Deir al-Balah, said a woman and her two children were killed in another strike on a house in the nearby urban refugee camp of Bureij early Saturday.

In the northern part of the Gaza Strip, an airstrike on a school-turned-shelter for displaced people in the town of Jabaliya killed at least four people and wounded about two dozen others, according to Gaza's Civil Defense authority, which operates under the territory's Hamas-run government. Israel's military said it struck a Hamas command post embedded in a former school compound.

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The war began when Hamas and other militants attacked Israel on Oct. 7, killing around 1,200 people, primarily civilians. Hamas is believed to still be holding more than 100 hostages. Israeli authorities estimate about a third are dead.

Israel's retaliatory offensive has killed more than 40,000 Palestinians, according to the Health Ministry in Gaza, which doesn't distinguish between civilians and combatants in its count. The ministry says more than 94,000 people have been wounded.

Violence has also spiked in the occupied West Bank. A more than weeklong military operation in the town of Jenin left dozens of dead. "They (Israeli forces) besieged the area and brought in bulldozers. As you see, they destroyed the whole area," said a resident, Mahmoud Al Razi.

On Friday, a 13-year-old girl and an American protester were reported shot and killed in separate incidents in the West Bank.

Aysenur Ezgi Eygi, 26, of Seattle, who also holds Turkish nationality, died after being shot in the head, two Palestinian doctors said. She had been demonstrating against Israeli settlements in the West Bank. Witnesses said she had posed no threat to Israeli forces and was shot during a moment of calm following clashes earlier in the afternoon.

The White House has said it was "deeply disturbed" by the killing and has called on Israel to investigate. The Israeli military said it was looking into reports that troops had killed a foreign national while firing at an "instigator of violent activity" in the area of the protest.

Her family in a statement said, "We welcome the White House's statement of condolences, but given the circumstances of Aysenur's killing, an Israeli investigation is not adequate." They urged President Joe Biden to order an independent investigation. They called the recent university graduate a "ray of sunshine" and an advocate for human dignity.

Separately, Palestinian health officials said Israeli fire killed a 13-year-old girl, Bana Laboom, in the West Bank village of Qaryout on Friday.

The Israeli military on Saturday said an initial inquiry indicated that security forces had been deployed to disperse a riot involving Palestinian and Israeli civilians that "included mutual rock hurling." Security forces fired shots in the air, the military said.

More than 500,000 Israeli settlers live in the West Bank, a territory captured by Israel in 1967. Increasing Israeli raids, attacks by Palestinian militants on Israelis and attacks by Israeli settlers on Palestinians have left more than 690 Palestinians dead since the Israel-Hamas war began in October, according to Palestinian health officials.

Israel has been under increasing pressure from the United States and other allies to reach a cease-fire deal in Gaza, but Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu insists on a demand that has emerged as a major sticking point in talks — continued Israeli control of the Philadelphi corridor, a narrow band along Gaza's border with Egypt where Israel contends Hamas smuggles weapons into Gaza. Egypt and Hamas deny it.

Hamas has accused Israel of dragging out months of negotiations by issuing new demands. Hamas has offered to release all hostages in return for an end to the war, the complete withdrawal of Israeli forces and the release of a large number of Palestinian prisoners, including high-profile militants — broadly the terms called for under an outline for a deal put forward by Biden in July.

Takeaways from Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz's response to violence after George Floyd's murder

By STEVE KARNOWSKI and MICHAEL GOLDBERG Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Kamala Harris' selection of Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz to be the Democratic vice presidential candidate has revived the debate over how he handled the biggest crisis of his political career.

Minneapolis and St. Paul erupted after a white Minneapolis police officer killed George Floyd. The Black man's murder in 2020 sparked a nationwide reckoning over racial discrimination and police misconduct. What the governor did — or failed to do — during the protests and their aftermath still draws sharp criti-

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cism from Republicans who say he should have acted sooner. And some progressives complain that Walz was not assertive enough in fixing the state's police agencies.

Here are some takeaways about about how Walz handled the protests and police reform efforts:

A fateful week

Floyd was killed on May 25, 2020, Memorial Day. Bystander video of his dying cries of "I can't breathe" spread quickly, stoking outrage. The protests were mostly peaceful at first, albeit with some vandalism and clashes with police.

Major looting started on May 27, two nights later. The police chief asked Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey to seek help from the National Guard. Walz, a 24-year National Guard veteran, approved a limited activation on May 28 though he continued to leave most of the response in the hands of local authorities.

The destruction only worsened that night. Protestors took control of the 3rd Precinct police station, which was torched.

On May 29, Walz criticized the "abject failure" of the city's response. He ordered a full mobilization of the Guard on May 30 and calm returned, but not before more than 1,500 businesses and buildings had been damaged, at a cost estimated to be nearly \$500 million.

Criticism from Minnesota Republicans and praise from allies

The Republican-controlled Minnesota Senate held hearings that July. The final report in October 2020 blamed a failure of executive leadership at the state and local level and a hesitation by the Democratic governor and city leaders to confront their ideological allies.

"Governor Walz, his administration and Mayor Frey failed to realize the seriousness of the riots and the danger to Minnesotans if rioters were not confronted and stopped," the Senate GOP report said. "Both Governor Walz and Mayor Frey failed to act in a timely manner to confront rioters with necessary force due to an ill-conceived philosophical belief that such an action would exacerbate the rioting."

Nonpartisan reviews also found problems with the response.

A report by the nonprofit Wilder Research, commissioned by the state, cited a lack of clear leadership early on. The report said the state did not set up a multiagency command center until too late, four days after Floyd was killed. It also said the National Guard was mobilized too late.

A separate after-action report commissioned by the city said Minneapolis officials were unfamiliar with the process for requesting assistance from the Guard, and that held up the approval and deployment of troops.

Meanwhile, Walz has said he and other officials rose to the occasion.

"Sitting on the sidelines and critiquing, that's not what being governor is. It's making the hard decisions at the time," Walz said during a gubernatorial debate in 2022. He said the way local, state and federal authorities worked together should serve as model. "I'm proud of Minnesota's response."

Trump has changed his tune

During recent appearances in Minnesota, Donald Trump falsely claimed that he personally was responsible, while president, for deploying the Guard. It was actually Walz who gave the orders.

"Every voter in Minnesota needs to know that when the violent mobs of anarchists and looters and Marxists came to burn down Minneapolis four years ago — remember me? — I couldn't get your governor to act," Trump, the Republican presidential nominee, said in July. "He's supposed to call in the National Guard or the Army. And he didn't do it."

That contrasts sharply with the praise that Trump heaped on Walz in 2020, as the dust settled on the crisis. Two days after Walz ordered the full mobilization, the then-president told governors and administration officials that Minnesota's chief executive had been doing a stellar job.

"What they did in Minneapolis was incredible. They went in and dominated, and it happened immediately," Trump said, according to an audio recording of the conference call. The audio shows that Trump didn't criticize the governor at the time. "Tim, you called up big numbers and the big numbers knocked them out so fast, it was like bowling pins," Trump said.

Two nonpartisan external reviews, released in March 2022, found shortcomings in the city and state responses.

Walz's efforts to reform police generates criticism and plaudits

In the months after the riots, Walz urged sweeping changes and signed police accountability packages in 2020, 2021 and 2023.

Michelle Gross, president of Communities United Against Police Brutality, said Walz was largely unreceptive to policies that would have led to more meaningful improvements. She pointed to stalled efforts to end a judicial doctrine known as qualified immunity, which shields police officers from liability for misconduct, and another proposal to increase the statute of limitations for police wrongful death cases.

Political allies have defended his push for changes.

The state's attorney general, Keith Ellison, who won convictions of the four officers charged in Floyd's death, said Walz found himself in an "impossible situation" during the summer of 2020. Nevertheless, Ellison said, the governor balanced the concerns of a grieving city with threats to public safety.

"Somebody's loved one is killed by the police, and you can't restore that person because death is final," Ellison said. "The best you can do is hold the (police) accountable."

Ben Crump, the influential civil rights attorney who represented Floyd's family, praised Walz as a "concerned and compassionate leader" for a grieving community.

"All leaders who are bold enough to actually lead face scrutiny and criticism, with some believing they went too far and others not far enough," Crump said. "That is usually an indication that they found a necessary middle ground."

With father of suspect charged in Georgia shooting, will more parents be held responsible?

By ED WHITE Associated Press

Murder charges filed against the father of a 14-year-old boy accused of a Georgia school shooting follow the successful prosecution of two parents in Michigan who were held responsible for a similar tragedy at a school north of Detroit.

Is it a sign of a crackdown on parents accused of gross negligence when it comes to kids and guns? Could public outrage lead to more prosecutions or changes in law in other states, too?

"It's a matter of looking at the relationship between what the child says and does and what the parent knows about what the child says and does," said David Shapiro, a former prosecutor who teaches at John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York.

Colin Gray, 54, has been charged with involuntary manslaughter and second-degree murder related to the deaths of two students and two teachers at Apalachee High School in Winder, outside Atlanta. Nine more people were wounded.

Gray's son, Colt Gray, is charged with murder. Investigators said he used a "semi-automatic AR-15 style rifle" in the attack.

The charges against Colin Gray "are directly connected with the actions of his son and allowing him to possess a weapon," said Chris Hosey, director of the Georgia Bureau of Investigation.

Milestone in Michigan

James and Jennifer Crumbley were convicted of involuntary manslaughter earlier this year for the deaths of four students at Oxford High School in 2021. It was the first time that parents were held criminally responsible for a U.S. mass school shooting. They're serving 10-year prison terms while appeals are pending.

The Crumbleys didn't know what son Ethan Crumbley was planning. But prosecutor Karen McDonald said their son's actions were foreseeable. They were summoned to discuss the 15-year-old's macabre drawings of a gun and blood on a math assignment and a message, "The thoughts won't stop. Help me. My life is useless."

The Crumbleys declined to take him home but said they would seek counseling. On that same day, Ethan Crumbley removed a gun from his backpack and began shooting, using a weapon that James Crumbley had purchased as a gift just a few days earlier. No one — parents or school staff — had checked the backpack.

The parents' "actions and inactions were inexorably intertwined" with what their son ultimately did at

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Oxford, the Michigan Court of Appeals said in 2023 when the groundbreaking case was allowed to move forward.

The Georgia case

Prosecutor Brad Smith declined to publicly disclose details that led him to charge Colin Gray in the Apalachee shooting. But in arrest warrants, authorities said he had provided a gun to his son "with knowledge that he was threat to himself and others."

Smith acknowledged the Michigan case during a news conference Friday and said his case was a first for Georgia.

"I'm not trying to send a message," he said. "I'm just trying to use the tools in my arsenal to prosecute people for the crimes they commit."

Colin Gray was interviewed last year when authorities were investigating his son about a menacing post on social media. The father said the teen "knows the seriousness of weapons and what they can do, and how to use them and not use them," according to a transcript. Nothing more was pursued.

McDonald, the prosecutor in Michigan, said the Georgia shooting and the father's arrest was a "real punch in the stomach."

"I can't believe the facts that stood out as so egregious in our case seem to be so similar," she told The Associated Press.

More scrutiny for parents?

McDonald said states have laws that carry consequences for gross negligence in various situations. She said it's encouraging that police in Georgia immediately investigated how the gun was obtained.

"I have never felt it was a moment that would open the floodgates to charges against parents or sending a message to people," McDonald said of the Crumbley case. "Most people don't need that message. It's heartbreaking to watch it play out."

She said it takes only seconds to put a lock on a gun, which she demonstrated for a jury.

Shapiro, the former New Jersey prosecutor, said all states likely have laws that can be used to hold parents responsible, though much depends on the facts and a prosecutor's views.

"You don't want to be able to allow parents to overlook those kinds of signs there is something seriously wrong or a serious risk," he said.

Michigan has a new law this year that requires adults to keep guns locked up when minors are present. In Newaygo County, a grandfather pleaded no contest in August in the death of a 5-year-old grandson. Another boy had picked up and fired a loaded shotgun.

"If people simply locked up their firearms, we would not be putting parents behind bars for this reason," said Kris Brown, the president of Brady, a gun violence prevention group. "And we would not be digging as many graves."

Sharp divisions persist over Walz's response to the riots that followed the murder of George Floyd

By STEVE KARNOWSKI and MICHAEL GOLDBERG Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Gov. Tim Walz faced the biggest crisis of his political career when Minnesota's two largest cities erupted in protests and riots after a white Minneapolis police officer killed George Floyd.

The Black man's murder in 2020 sparked a nationwide reckoning over racial discrimination and police misconduct. His death, and its complicated aftermath, tested Walz's leadership at one of the state's most consequential moments.

What the governor did — or failed to do — during and after the violence in Minneapolis and St. Paul drew sharp criticism from Republicans in Minnesota. Nor did it satisfy some progressives who had urged him to take bolder steps to remake policing in the state. Walz's defenders say he did an exemplary job under unprecedented circumstances.

Four years later, on the national stage as the Democratic nominee for vice president, Walz is facing similar questions and criticism: Republicans are calling him a left-wing radical who was too slow to act and some

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progressives are saying he was not radical enough in addressing police abuses.

A review by The Associated Press — based on government documents, consultant reports, news accounts, video and audio recordings, as well as interviews with families, activists, lawyers and public officials — paints a nuanced picture of how Walz handled the challenge. As a relatively new governor, he tried to balance the competing pressures and interests of local and federal officials, including then-President Donald Trump, while navigating the dangers posed by fast-evolving protests and riots taking place amid a deadly global pandemic.

"Sitting on the sidelines and critiquing, that's not what being governor is. It's making the hard decisions at the time," Walz said during a gubernatorial debate in 2022.

He defended how local, state and federal authorities worked together, and said it should serve as model for other states. "I'm proud of Minnesota's response; I'm proud of Minnesota's first-responders who were out there, from firefighters to police to the National Guard, to citizens that were out there," he said.

Fateful days in May

Floyd was killed on May 25, 2020, Memorial Day. Bystander video of his dying cries of "I can't breathe" spread quickly, stoking outrage. The protests were mostly peaceful at first, albeit with some vandalism and clashes with police, as leaders struggled to balance the free-speech rights of protesters against the need to protect public safety.

Major looting started on May 27, two nights later. A Target store was plundered. An auto parts store and several other businesses were torched. The police chief asked the mayor to seek help from the National Guard. Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey would later say the governor hesitated, an accusation that Walz would deny.

Walz, a 24-year National Guard veteran, approved a limited activation on May 28 to protect firefighters and the State Capitol complex, and declared a peacetime emergency, though he continued to leave most of the response in the hands of local authorities.

The destruction only worsened that night. Protestors took control of the 3rd Precinct station, which soon caught fire and was destroyed. Guard troops did not arrive at the police station until several hours later, in the early hours of May 29.

That day, Walz criticized the "abject failure" of the city's response. He said the state would take control and he imposed a nighttime curfew.

"I will assume responsibility," Walz said, adding that he understood criticism that the state had not moved quickly enough. "That is on me," he said.

After another night of violence between protesters and police, and more arson, the governor ordered a full mobilization of the Guard. He considered a Pentagon offer to send military police but he did not accept it. The next day, May 31, he said Attorney General Keith Ellison, who enjoyed trust within the Black community, would take over prosecution of the officers involved in Floyd's death.

By the time most of the violence subsided, more than 1,500 businesses and buildings had been damaged, costing an estimated \$500 million.

Republicans criticize state and local response

The Republican-controlled Minnesota Senate held a series of hearings on the unrest and the official response that July. The final report in October 2020 blamed a failure of executive leadership at the state and local level and a hesitation by the Democratic governor and city leaders to confront their ideological allies.

"Governor Walz, his administration and Mayor Frey failed to realize the seriousness of the riots and the danger to Minnesotans if rioters were not confronted and stopped," the Senate GOP report said. "Both Governor Walz and Mayor Frey failed to act in a timely manner to confront rioters with necessary force due to an ill-conceived philosophical belief that such an action would exacerbate the rioting."

During recent appearances in Minnesota, Trump falsely claimed that he personally was responsible for deploying the National Guard, even though it was actually Walz who gave the mobilization orders.

"Every voter in Minnesota needs to know that when the violent mobs of anarchists and looters and Marxists came to burn down Minneapolis four years ago — remember me? — I couldn't get your governor

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to act," the Republican presidential nominee said in July. "He's supposed to call in the National Guard or the Army. And he didn't do it."

That contrasts sharply with the praise that Trump heaped on Walz as the dust settled on the crisis. Two days after Walz ordered the full National Guard mobilization, the then-president told governors and administration officials on a conference call that Minnesota's chief executive had been doing a stellar job.

"What they did in Minneapolis was incredible. They went in and dominated, and it happened immediately," Trump said, according to an audio recording of the call obtained by the AP. The audio shows that the president didn't criticize the governor at the time. "Tim, you called up big numbers and the big numbers knocked them out so fast, it was like bowling pins," Trump said.

Two nonpartisan external reviews, released in March 2022, found shortcoming in both the city's and the state's responses.

A report by the nonprofit Wilder Research, commissioned by the Department of Public Safety, cited a lack of clear leadership early on. The report said the state did not set up a multiagency command center until too late, four days after Floyd was killed. It said the center had a "chaotic beginning," with no clear chain of command, while the city continued to operate its own emergency operations center with competing law enforcement strategies. The report also said the National Guard was mobilized too late.

A separate after-action report commissioned by the city and done by the risk management firm Hillard Heintze said Minneapolis officials who requested assistance from the Guard were unfamiliar with the process, which held up the approval and deployment of troops.

Walz is praised and criticized for his push for changes

In the months after the riots, Walz urged sweeping changes. He called lawmakers back into a special session that July. They banned neck restraints like the kind used on Floyd and imposed a duty to intercede on officers who see a colleague using excessive force.

Walz signed a modest police accountability package in 2021 that had some limits on no-knock warrants and created a police misconduct database. Later in 2021, the governor opposed a ballot measure in Minneapolis that had its roots in the "defund the police" movement. With Democrats in full control of the Legislature in 2023, he signed tougher restrictions on no-knock warrants that, while short of a ban, permitted them in only very limited exceptions.

Some leaders of the movement for police reform say Walz's sympathies lie with law enforcement over protestors.

Del Shea Perry called unsuccessfully for authorities to be punished after her son, Hardel Sherrell, died in what she considered a preventable death in a northern Minnesota jail in 2018 from a medical condition. The lack of accountability was one reason she took to the streets after Floyd was murdered, and she remains dissatisfied with the governor.

"This entire administration has failed me," Perry said. "We elected them to be our voice, and you're not even going to work for us. And we promise to put you in the position, and this is what you do. You get the Black vote and then all of a sudden you're gone."

Michelle Gross, president of the Minnesota-based Communities United Against Police Brutality, said Walz was largely unresponsive to policies that would have led to more meaningful improvements in police accountability. She pointed to stalled efforts to end a judicial doctrine known as qualified immunity, which shields police officers from liability for misconduct, and a proposal to increase the statute of limitations for police wrongful death cases.

"He's been a little bit too quick to kind of give the cops what they wanted," Gross said. "He hasn't been as responsive to passing legislation that would actually, you know, change policing in fundamental ways. So that's been a big frustration."

Political allies, leaders such as Ellison, the state's attorney general who won convictions of the four officers charged in Floyd's death, have long defended Walz's response to the riots and efforts to seek change.

Ellison said Walz found himself in an "impossible situation" during the summer of 2020, but adequately balanced the concerns of a grieving city with threats to public safety during the protests and during the

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long fight for reform.

"Somebody's loved one is killed by the police, and you can't restore that person because death is final," Ellison said. "The best you can do is hold the (police) accountable."

Ben Crump, the influential civil rights attorney who represented Floyd's family, praised Walz as a "concerned and compassionate leader" for a grieving community in the wake of Floyd's murder.

"He used his position to advocate for passage of important police reform legislation, which stalled in many other jurisdictions," Crump said. "All leaders who are bold enough to actually lead face scrutiny and criticism, with some believing they went too far and others not far enough. That is usually an indication that they found a necessary middle ground."

How to pick the best preschool or child care center for your child

By MORIAH BALINGIT AP Education Writer

Preschool options are growing with the expansion of early learning programs, giving families in some parts of the U.S. a dizzying array of choices.

Some states, like Colorado and New Mexico, are funneling state money into existing private preschools or child care centers. Others, like California, are expanding preschool through the public school system. Some cities are launching their own universal preschool programs. In the 2022-2023 school year, 35% of 4-year-olds and 7% of 3-year-olds were enrolled in public preschools — a record high.

The benefits of high-quality preschool are clear, research shows, and children from low-income households stand to gain the most. They are more prepared for kindergarten, which has grown increasingly academic, are less likely to need special education services and are less likely to have to repeat a grade. There are longer-term benefits, too. Adults who attended preschool are less likely to be incarcerated and are healthier than those who did not.

Preschool once was reserved mostly for families who could pay, or for families with low enough incomes to qualify for public programs. Now, hundreds of thousands of families have more options than before.

But how to pick the right one? Here are some things to consider when looking for a high-quality preschool.

Take a tour

Grownups should take a tour of a preschool they're considering — and keep an eye out for interactions between adults and children, the state of the facilities and other clues to the quality of the care.

In a high-quality preschool or child care center, teachers are engaged. "They are on the floor, they're at tables, they are asking questions," said Amanda Batts, who oversees quality assurance for the National Association for the Education of Young Children, which credentials preschools. "They're engaging in co-inquiry with the children in their care."

Red flags, Batts said, would include "disorganized learning spaces." Preschools are inherently chaotic places, but classrooms should still be well-organized and clean, and children should have access to learning materials like toys and books.

Ask about teachers and curriculum

Parents should ask what the training requirements are for the educators, and how much they are paid, said Steven Barnett, head of the National Institute of Early Education Research. Many preschool teachers have bachelor's degrees and teaching certifications similar to those required for teachers in K-12 schools. Many others have or are working toward a child development associate certificate. A CDA requires coursework, an exam, practicum hours and an observation, where teachers must show they can apply those lessons in the classroom.

Curriculum is important in preschool because it guides teachers in planning play-based learning activities. A high-quality preschool or child care center should be able to share its curriculum, Barnett said.

If a parent spots a worksheet on a tour, it could be a sign that the instruction is not developmentally appropriate, said Batts.

Instead, experts say preschools should heavily emphasize social-emotional learning — teaching kids how to interact with their peers and how to manage their emotions — along with learning their letters

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and numbers. Those peer interactions are best practiced through play.

Don't worry much about fancy philosophies

Some preschools advertise they use a name-brand early education philosophy, often a European one like Montessori, Waldorf or Reggio Emilia.

Individual schools, however, vary widely on how closely they adhere to a particular approach, Barnett said. The most important thing is that a preschool has a cohesive learning plan, he said.

Outline your priorities

Families weigh multiple factors when choosing a preschool. Many parents are looking for a preschool where the hours align with their work schedules. And cost is obviously a consideration.

Batts encourages families to figure out their priorities and rank them, "so that you can find a place that's going to meet – perhaps not all – but the most important priorities for your family."

Find out if you qualify for assistance with costs

You might be surprised how many families qualify for free preschool or a child care subsidy.

Many places have recently expanded public preschool and programs to help families pay for privately run preschools and child care operations.

The federal government funds organizations that help people navigate their options or connect them with child care assistance. To find your local agency, Child Care Aware of America has a special search tool on their website.

"Every state is different, and in a lot of situations, the most helpful thing is to talk to someone who can assess your family's individual situation," said Anne Hedgepeth, chief of policy and advocacy at Child Care Aware of America.

Check licensing

Once you've narrowed down programs, check their licenses.

Licensing requirements differ from state to state, but they generally outline health, safety and staffing guidelines preschool and child care operations must meet. Many states have exemptions for certain types of preschools, like small, home-based programs. The Department of Health and Human Services has compiled information about licensing and registration of child care facilities for every state and territory.

Many states recognize child care centers that go beyond minimum licensing requirements. For instance, a preschool may require additional staff training or outline efforts to engage with parents. In Alabama, private preschools and child care operations can be awarded stars based on their curriculum, training requirements and level of engagement with families.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children also accredits child care centers and preschools, but many high-quality centers don't pursue that credential.

Nashville's Mother Church of Country Music retains its roots as religious house of worship

By LUIS ANDRES HENAO Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — Nashville's Ryman Auditorium is known as the Mother Church of Country Music. And, indeed, it began as a church, built by a riverboat captain who was converted to religion by an evangelist.

More than 130 years after it was built as the nondenominational Union Gospel Tabernacle, Music City's most revered concert venue retains its religious roots.

Thousands have filled its original wooden pews surrounded by colorful stained-glass windows to listen to stars ranging from Johnny Cash and Dolly Parton to Prince, Taylor Swift and Elvis, the king of rock 'n' roll.

"Technically it's a building, but it's clearly a living entity of some sort," said Jessi Woods, a tourist from Massachusetts. She toured the Ryman's museum in the morning of a recent visit and attended a performance by the band Postmodern Jukebox in the evening.

It all started with the Rev. Samuel Jones, an evangelist who came from Georgia to Nashville in 1885 for a revival sponsored by local churches under a huge tent.

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Jones began denouncing Nashvillians for ignoring what he believed were the sins of the time: everything from baseball and bike riding to prostitution, gambling and dancing. Worst of all for the reformed alcoholic: drinking.

Tom Ryman, a wealthy captain who served whiskey in his steamship line, took offense. So, he rounded up a group of his friends to attend the revival and beat up Jones.

Instead, the story goes that after one sermon, the preacher convinced him to give his life to God.

Ryman stopped selling alcohol on his ships; he wouldn't even christen steamships with champagne, and instead used jugs of water. He also began to dream about building a house of worship in Nashville for religious gatherings, so evangelists like Jones could have a place to preach.

Through his funding and with the help of donations from the community, the Union Gospel Tabernacle officially opened on May 4, 1892, with a music festival.

The tabernacle did not have a dedicated congregation, said Ryman Auditorium curator Joshua Bronnenberg.

"It was more of a place for, say, like a traveling evangelist to preach in, such as a Billy Sunday or Gypsy Smith or Samuel Jones," Bronnenberg said.

After Ryman's death, it was renamed after him, and it went on to become revered as one of America's leading music venues.

"What was built as a religious meeting place for Nashvillians," the auditorium says on its site, "became a different type of sanctuary that grew bigger than Ryman ever imagined."

For its first two decades or so, it was a hybrid gathering place hosting religious leaders and some of the biggest names in ballet, opera and theater. It became known as the Carnegie Hall of the South.

"We've had all sorts of progressive events: suffrage events, scientific demonstrations, magicians, all kinds of political icons and cultural icons have graced the stage," Bronnenberg said.

"You also had bizarre things: we've had boxing matches, circuses," he said. "And alongside, we had funerals, we had civil rights protests. ... If you had any kind of significant event in the city, it was here."

It went on to host meetings of the Southern Baptist Convention, memorable performances by big names, such as comedian Charlie Chaplin and magician Harry Houdini, and appearances on stage by President Teddy Roosevelt and the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

The venue also became known for its unique acoustics beloved by artists.

"It's Ryman Auditorium's roots as a church that resulted in its impressive acoustics," the Ryman's site says, "as the auditorium was constructed to project the voices, songs, and instruments of weekly church services."

It also became the home of the Grand Ole Opry — the most famous country music and entertainment show of its time — from 1943 to 1974.

"The show was transmitted using the world's tallest radio tower at the time, built just outside of Nashville, bringing country music to living rooms from California to New York for the first time" the site says. "Audiences across the U.S. had discovered a love for country music."

After the Grand Ole Opry left, the Ryman was vacant for nearly two decades and fell into disrepair. It was restored thanks to donations by artists and members of the community and reopened in the 1990s. It now has a seating capacity of 2,362.

Today, lovers of country music — and other genres — travel to the Ryman from across America and sit on its pews. It's lovingly known as "the Soul of Nashville."

"It definitely has a soul feel," said Woods, the Massachusetts tourist. "And I don't believe it's just because of the musical acts that have been there, but there's a palpable energy, for sure."

Ukraine mourns dead from major Russian strike, vows response with underground weapons production

By YEHOA KONOVALOV and KATIE MARIE DAVIES Associated Press

POLTAVA, Ukraine (AP) — Funeral services were held Saturday for victims of one of the deadliest Russian airstrikes since the war in Ukraine began, as Ukraine's president vowed to increase domestic military production by creating underground weapons factories.

The funerals took place in the eastern Ukrainian city of Poltava for the victims of a Russian missile attack on a military training facility that left over 50 dead and more than 300 injured.

Hundreds of mourners, including grieving families, local residents, and officials, gathered at the Cathedral of the Assumption in the city, some 350 kilometers (200 miles) southeast of Kyiv, for the solemn ceremony. Sobbing relatives, many holding red carnations, stood over caskets placed outside the church, draped in yellow-and-blue Ukrainian flags. An air raid siren sounded during the service.

Local residents knelt in silent tribute as hearses carrying the victims passed by on their way to a military cemetery outside the city for burial.

Russia has intensified missile and drone attacks on Ukrainian cities in recent weeks, targeting energy infrastructure across the country and causing deadly strikes in residential areas.

The attacks have underscored Moscow's long-range capabilities as Ukraine braces for what will likely be another difficult winter as Russia continues to smash Ukraine's power grid, knocking out some 70% of generation capacity and rupturing heat and water supplies.

The sound of explosions thundered over the Ukrainian capital overnight as multiple Russian attack drones were intercepted by the city's air defenses. No injuries or serious damage were reported.

The Ukrainian Air Force said that 67 drones were launched over the country overnight, with air defenses active in 11 regions. Fifty-eight drones were shot down, with three more destroyed by electronic weapons systems, it said.

Debris from one drone was photographed on the street outside Ukraine's parliament, the Verkhovna Rada. Ukraine's parliamentary press service confirmed that drone fragments had been found but said there were no casualties and no damage to the parliament building.

Elsewhere, a Russian artillery attack Saturday on the eastern Ukrainian city of Kostiantynivka killed three men and injured three other people, said Donetsk region Gov. Vadym Filashkin. He said the attack damaged a high-rise building and local power lines.

Late Friday, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said the death toll from the Sept. 3 strike at the Military Institute of Communications in Poltava had risen to 55, with 328 people injured.

"That includes people with severe injuries, such as amputations and internal organ damage," Zelenskyy said, speaking at a conference outside the Italian city of Milan.

"Our people are under constant threat of Russian missile and drone strikes — every night and every day."

Zelenskyy renewed his call for the removal of restrictions on using Western-supplied weapons to strike Russian territory, adding that Ukraine was ramping up its own weapons production.

"We are setting up underground weapons production facilities so Ukrainian soldiers can defend themselves, even if supplies from our partners are delayed," he said.

"We have developed new drones and missiles, and we are gradually bringing this war back to Russia. Eventually, (Russian President Vladimir) Putin will feel the pressure to seek only one thing: peace."

Kyiv has continued to launch its own strikes against Russia. In the Russian border region of Voronezh Saturday, Gov. Aleksandr Gusev said that a drone strike had sparked a fire and the detonation of "explosive objects."

Writing on social media, he said that a state of emergency had been declared for the region's Ostrogozhsky district and that several villages had been evacuated.

He did not provide the names of the villages affected and urged followers not to share photos or videos of the fire that could be geolocated. ____

Davies reported from Manchester, England. Evgeniy Maloletka and Alex Babenko in Poltava, Ukraine, and Derek Gatopoulos in Kyiv, Ukraine, contributed.

Two astronauts are left behind in space as Boeing's troubled capsule returns to Earth empty

By MARCIA DUNN AP Aerospace Writer

Boeing's first astronaut mission ended Friday night with an empty capsule landing and two test pilots still in space, left behind until next year because NASA judged their return too risky.

Six hours after departing the International Space Station, Starliner parachuted into New Mexico's White Sands Missile Range, descending on autopilot through the desert darkness.

It was an uneventful close to a drama that began with the June launch of Boeing's long-delayed crew debut and quickly escalated into a dragged-out cliffhanger of a mission stricken by thruster failures and helium leaks. For months, Butch Wilmore and Suni Williams' return was in question as engineers struggled to understand the capsule's problems.

Boeing insisted after extensive testing that Starliner was safe to bring the two home, but NASA disagreed and booked a flight with SpaceX instead. Their SpaceX ride won't launch until the end of this month, which means they'll be up there until February — more than eight months after blasting off on what should have been a quick trip.

Wilmore and Williams should have flown Starliner back to Earth by mid-June, a week after launching in it. But their ride to the space station was marred by the cascade of thruster trouble and helium loss, and NASA ultimately decided it was too risky to return them on Starliner.

So with fresh software updates, the fully automated capsule left with their empty seats and blue space-suits along with some old station equipment.

"She's on her way home," Williams radioed as the white and blue-trimmed capsule undocked from the space station 260 miles (420 kilometers) over China and disappeared into the black void.

Williams stayed up late to see how everything turned out. "A good landing, pretty awesome," said Boeing's Mission Control.

Cameras on the space station and a pair of NASA planes caught the capsule as a white streak coming in for the touchdown, which drew cheer.

There were some snags during reentry, including more thruster issues, but Starliner made a "bull's-eye landing," said NASA's commercial crew program manager Steve Stich.

Even with the safe return, "I think we made the right decision not to have Butch and Suni on board," Stich said at a news conference early Saturday. "All of us feel happy about the successful landing. But then there's a piece of us, all of us, that we wish it would have been the way we had planned it."

Boeing did not participate in the Houston news briefing. But two of the company's top space and defense officials, Ted Colbert and Kay Sears, told employees in a note that they backed NASA's ruling.

"While this may not have been how we originally envisioned the test flight concluding, we support NASA's decision for Starliner and are proud of how our team and spacecraft performed," the executives wrote.

Starliner's crew demo capped a journey filled with delays and setbacks. After the space shuttles retired more than a decade ago, NASA hired Boeing and SpaceX for orbital taxi service. Boeing ran into so many problems on its first test flight with no one aboard in 2019 that it had to repeat it. The 2022 do-over uncovered even more flaws and the repair bill topped \$1 billion.

SpaceX's crew ferry flight later this month will be its 10th for NASA since 2020. The Dragon capsule will launch on the half-year expedition with only two astronauts since two seats are reserved for Wilmore and Williams for the return leg.

As veteran astronauts and retired Navy captains, Wilmore and Williams anticipated hurdles on the test flight. They've kept busy in space, helping with repairs and experiments. The two are now full-time station crew members along with the seven others on board.

Even before the pair launched on June 5 from Cape Canaveral, Florida, Starliner's propulsion system was leaking helium. The leak was small and thought to be isolated, but four more cropped up after liftoff. Then five thrusters failed. Although four of the thrusters were recovered, it gave NASA pause as to whether more malfunctions might hamper the capsule's descent from orbit.

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Boeing conducted numerous thruster tests in space and on the ground over the summer, and was convinced its spacecraft could safely bring the astronauts back. But NASA could not get comfortable with the thruster situation and went with SpaceX.

Flight controllers conducted more test firings of the capsule's thrusters following undocking; one failed to ignite. Engineers suspect the more the thrusters are fired, the hotter they become, causing protective seals to swell and obstruct the flow of propellant. They won't be able to examine any of the parts; the section holding the thrusters was ditched just before reentry.

Starliner will be transported in a couple weeks back to NASA's Kennedy Space Center, where the analyses will unfold.

NASA officials stressed that the space agency remains committed to having two competing U.S. companies transporting astronauts. The goal is for SpaceX and Boeing to take turns launching crews — one a year per company — until the space station is abandoned in 2030 right before its fiery reentry. That doesn't give Boeing much time to catch up, but the company intends to push forward with Starliner, according to NASA.

Stich said post-landing it's too early to know when the next Starliner flight with astronauts might occur. "It will take a little time to determine the path forward," he said.

Trump heads to a deep-red part of swing-state Wisconsin to talk about the economy

By MICHAEL GOLDBERG and SCOTT BAUER Associated Press

MOSINEE, Wis. (AP) — Former President Donald Trump heads to Wisconsin on Saturday for a rally that's intended to focus heavily on the economy, marking his first trip to the deep red, largely rural part of the key battleground state.

Trump and Vice President Kamala Harris have been talking more about their plans for the economy in the days leading up to Tuesday's presidential debate, where their dueling proposals are expected to take center stage.

Trump on Thursday promised to lead what he called a "national economic renaissance" by increasing tariffs, slashing regulations to boost energy production and drastically cutting government spending as well as corporate taxes for companies that produce in the U.S.

Harris this week called for increasing corporate tax rates, not taxing tips and Social Security income and expanding tax breaks for small businesses to promote more entrepreneurship.

Both Harris and Trump have been frequent visitors to Wisconsin this year, a state where four of the past six presidential elections have been decided by less than a percentage point. Several polls of Wisconsin voters conducted after President Joe Biden withdrew showed Harris and Trump in a close race.

Democrats consider Wisconsin to be one of the must-win "blue wall" states. Biden, who was in Wisconsin on Thursday, won the state in 2020 by just under 21,000 votes. Trump carried it by a slightly larger margin, nearly 23,000 votes, in 2016.

Trump was taking his economic message to the central Wisconsin city of Mosinee, with a population of about 4,500 people. It is within Wisconsin's mostly rural 7th Congressional District, a reliably Republican area in a purple state. Trump carried the county where Mosinee is located by 18 percentage points in both 2016 and 2020.

Democrats have relied on massive turnout in the state's two largest cities of Milwaukee and Madison to counter Republican strength in rural areas like Mosinee and the Milwaukee suburbs. Trump must run up the votes in places like Mosinee to have any chance at cutting into the Democrats' advantage in urban areas.

Republicans held their national convention in Milwaukee in July and Trump has made four previous stops to the state, most recently just last week in the western Wisconsin city of La Crosse.

Harris and her running mate, Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz, last month filled the same Milwaukee arena where Republicans held their national convention for a rally that coincided with the Democratic National

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Convention just 90 miles away in Chicago. Walz returned Monday to Milwaukee, where he spoke at a Labor Day rally organized by unions.

Biden was in rural western Wisconsin on Thursday, his first visit to the state since dropping out of the race. Biden used the visit to announce \$7.3 billion in investments for 16 cooperatives that will provide electricity for rural areas across 23 states. The intent is to bring down the cost of badly needed internet connections in hard-to-reach areas.

Gaza enters its 2nd school year without schooling. The cost could be heavy for kids' futures

By WAFAA SHURAFU and LEE KEATH Associated Press

KHAN YOUNIS, Gaza Strip (AP) — This week, when they would normally be going back to school, the Qudeh family's children stumbled with armfuls of rubble they collected from a destroyed building to sell for use in building graves in the cemetery that is now their home in southern Gaza.

"Anyone our age in other countries is studying and learning," said 14-year-old Ezz el-Din Qudeh, after he and his three siblings — the youngest a 4-year-old — hauled a load of concrete chunks. "We're not. We're working at something beyond our capacities. We are forced to in order to get a living."

As Gaza enters its second school year without schooling, most of its children are caught up helping their families in the daily struggle to survive amid Israel's devastating campaign.

Children trod barefoot on the dirt roads to carry water in plastic jerricans from distribution points to their families living in tent cities teeming with Palestinians driven from their homes. Others wait at charity kitchens with containers to bring back food.

Humanitarian workers say the extended deprivation of education threatens long-term damage to Gaza's children. Younger children suffer in their cognitive, social and emotional development, and older children are at greater risk of being pulled into work or early marriage, said Tess Ingram, regional spokesperson for UNICEF, the United Nations agency for children.

"The longer a child is out of school, the more they are at risk of dropping out permanently and not returning," she said.

Gaza's 625,000 school-age children already missed out on almost an entire year of education. Schools shut down after Israel launched its assault on the territory in retaliation for Hamas' Oct. 7 attack on southern Israel. With languishing negotiations to halt fighting in the Israel-Hamas war, it's not known when they can return to classes.

More than 90% of Gaza's school buildings have been damaged by Israeli bombardment, many of them run by UNWRA, the U.N. agency for Palestinians, according to the Global Education Cluster, a grouping of aid organizations led by UNICEF and Save the Children. About 85% are so wrecked they need major reconstruction — meaning it could take years before they are usable again. Gaza's universities are also in ruins. Israel contends that Hamas militants operate out of schools.

Some 1.9 million of Gaza's 2.3 million people have been driven from their homes. They have crowded into the sprawling tent camps that lack water or sanitation systems, or U.N. and government schools now serving as shelters.

Kids have little choice but to help families

Mo'men Qudeh said that before the war, his kids enjoyed school. "They were outstanding students. We raised them well," he said.

Now he, his four sons and his daughter live in a tent in a cemetery in Khan Younis after they had to flee their home in the eastern neighborhoods of the city. The kids get scared sleeping next to the graves of the dead, he said, but they have no alternative.

The continual flow of victims from airstrikes and shelling into the cemetery and the plentiful supply of destroyed buildings are their source for a tiny income.

Every day at 7 a.m., Qudeh and his children start picking through rubble. On a recent day of work, the young kids stumbled off the pile of wreckage with what they found. Qudeh's 4-year-old son balanced a

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chunk of concrete under his arm, his blonde curly hair covered in dust. Outside their tent, they crouched on the ground and pounded the concrete into powder.

On a good day, after hours of work, they make about 15 shekels (\$4) selling the powder for use in constructing new graves.

Qudeh, who was injured in Israel's 2014 war with Hamas, said he can't do the heavy work alone.

"I cry for them when I see them with torn hands," he said. At night, the exhausted children can't sleep because of their aches and pain, he said. "They lie on their mattress like dead people," he said.

Children are eager for a lost education

Aid groups have worked to set up educational alternatives — though the results have been limited as they wrestle with the flood of other needs.

UNICEF and other aid agencies are running 175 temporary learning centers, most set up since late May, that have served some 30,000 students, with about 1,200 volunteer teachers, Ingram said. They provide classes in literacy and numeracy as well as mental health and emotional development activities.

But she said they struggle to get supplies like pens, paper and books because they are not considered lifesaving priorities as aid groups struggle to get enough food and medicine into Gaza.

In August, UNRWA began a "back to learning" program in 45 of its schools-turned-shelters that provide children activities like games, drama, arts, music and sports. The aim is to "give them some respite, a chance to reconnect with their friends and to simply be children," spokesperson Juliette Touma said.

Education has long been a high priority among Palestinians. Before the war, Gaza had a high literacy rate — nearly 98%.

When she last visited Gaza in April, Ingram said children often told her they miss school, their friends and their teachers. While describing how much he wanted to go back to class, one boy abruptly stopped in panic and asked her, "I can go back, can't I?"

"That was just heartbreaking to me," she said.

Parents told her they had seen the emotional changes in their children without the daily stability provided by school and with compounding traumas from displacement, bombardment and deaths or injuries in the family. Some become sullen and withdrawn, others become easily agitated or frustrated.

Gaza's schools are packed with homeless families instead of students

The 11-month Israeli campaign has destroyed large swaths of Gaza and brought a humanitarian crisis, with widespread malnutrition and diseases spreading. More than 40,000 Palestinians have been killed, according to Gaza health officials. Children are among the most severely affected. Ingram said nearly all of Gaza's 1.1 million children are believed to need psychosocial help.

Israel says its campaign aims to eliminate Hamas to ensure it cannot repeat its Oct. 7 attack, in which militants killed some 1,200 people in southern Israel and abducted 250 others.

The conflict has also set back education for Palestinian children in the West Bank, where Israel has intensified movement restrictions and carried out heavy raids.

"On any given day since October, between 8% and 20% of schools in the West Bank have been closed," Ingram said. When schools are open, attendance is lowered because of difficulties in movement or because children are afraid, she said.

Parents in Gaza say they struggle to give their children even informal teaching with the chaos around them.

At a school in the central town of Deir al-Balah, classrooms were packed with families, their laundry draped over the stairwells outside. Made of bedsheets and tarps propped on sticks, ramshackle tents stretched across the yard.

"The children's future is lost," said Umm Ahmed Abu Awja, surrounded by nine of her young grandchildren. "What they studied last year is completely forgotten. If they return to school, they have to start from the beginning."

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Barkley scores 3 TDs as Eagles beat Packers 34-29 in Brazil.

Packers' Love injured in final minute

By STEVE MEGARGE and MAURICIO SAVARESE AP Sports Writers

SAO PAULO (AP) — Saquon Barkley has been practicing the art of positive thinking since switching teams for the first time in his career.

Yet he probably couldn't have imagined making such a spectacular debut for the Philadelphia Eagles.

Barkley scored three touchdowns Friday night in the first NFL game in South America and led the Eagles to a 34-29 victory over the Green Bay Packers, who lost quarterback Jordan Love to an injury in the closing seconds.

"I'm always about visualizing success and putting positivity in my mind," said Barkley, who became the first player to score three touchdowns in his Eagles debut since Terrell Owens in 2004. "That's one of my goals this year: Be more of a positive thinker."

Now it's the Packers who will try to get negative thoughts out of their minds as they worry about the future of Love, who signed a four-year, \$220 million extension this summer. Love limped off the field with assistance after getting injured with 6 seconds left.

Packers coach Matt LaFleur had no update on Love's condition after the game.

Backup Malik Willis was sacked by Zack Baun on the final play, preventing him from launching a Hail Mary from the Philadelphia 47.

"We've got to learn from this," LaFleur said. "Because, just watching the tape, and I'm not trying to take anything away from Philly — they battled and they played their game — but I think there was a lot of opportunities that we didn't capitalize."

Barkley rushed for 109 yards and scored on an 18-yard catch and runs of 11 and 2 yards. He spent six seasons with the New York Giants before Philadelphia signed him to a three-year, \$37.75 million deal with \$26 million guaranteed.

Jalen Hurts was 20 of 34 for 278 yards with two touchdowns and two interceptions for the Eagles. A.J. Brown caught five passes for 119 yards, including a 67-yard touchdown, in a festive setting that Eagles coach Nick Sirianni compared to a playoff atmosphere.

"Man, did Brazil get a great game tonight or what?" Sirianni said. "I know we converted some people to be big-time football fans tonight."

Green Bay's Jayden Reed scored on a 33-yard jet sweep and a 70-yard reception, which was the longest touchdown completion of Love's career. Reed caught Love's pass inside Philadelphia's 40 and made a move at around the 30 that sent safety C.J. Gardner-Johnson sprawling.

Reed became the first player to have a touchdown catch of 30-plus yards and a touchdown run of 30-plus yards in a season opener since Hall of Famer Jim Brown of the Cleveland Browns against Washington in 1963.

Reed also had an apparent 38-yard touchdown reception on the opening drive get wiped out because both teams had 12 men on the field. He finished with four catches for 138 yards.

Love went 17 of 34 for 260 yards with two touchdowns and an interception.

Barkley's third touchdown put the Eagles ahead 31-26 with 4:26 left in the third quarter. Reed Blankenship set up that score with an interception that gave Philadelphia the ball at Green Bay's 25.

The Eagles still led 31-26 when Jaire Alexander intercepted Hurts in the end zone early in the fourth quarter. Green Bay drove into the red zone but settled for a 26-yard field goal by rookie Brayden Narveson, who went 3 for 4 on his attempts.

Philadelphia then controlled possession until Jake Elliott kicked a 21-yard field goal with 27 seconds left.

Some Eagles players had expressed reluctance earlier this week about traveling to Brazil, which cost them the opportunity to play their season opener in front of a friendly crowd at Lincoln Financial Field. The crowd at NeoQuimica Arena instead was balanced among Packers fans, Eagles fans and spectators who just cheered any positive development.

The Eagles weren't complaining afterward.

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"I don't know if Sao Paulo knows when to cheer, but it was great," Brown said. "It was loud the entire time. They kind of got a bad rap. We got a whole bunch of 'Don't do's,' but it's been great ever since we got here."

Players from both teams were slipping on the playing surface throughout the first half, prompting many to change their cleats. A Brazilian soccer league game was played in the stadium five days earlier.

NeoQuimica Arena's field is often praised by soccer players as Brazil's best, but it had never hosted an American football game. The hybrid field includes both grass and synthetic fiber.

The slippery surface may have contributed to a sloppy start.

Philadelphia committed turnovers on each of its first two series, enabling Green Bay to start back-to-back drives in the red zone, but the Packers settled for field goals both times.

"The red area was a huge problem tonight," LaFleur said. "I would say a year ago, we were pretty damn good in that area. And we got destroyed in that area tonight."

The offenses took over in the second and third quarters. Six of seven possessions resulted in touchdowns.

INJURIES

Eagles LB Devin White (ankle) didn't play. The Packers were missing RBs AJ Dillon and MarShawn Lloyd. Dillon went on injured reserve last week with a neck issue, and Lloyd was out with a hamstring injury.

UP NEXT

Packers: Host Indianapolis on Sunday, Sept. 15.

Eagles: Host Atlanta on Monday, Sept. 16.

Taylor Fritz beats Frances Tiafoe to become the first American man in a US Open final since 2006

By HOWARD FENDRICH AP Tennis Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — When Taylor Fritz, a 26-year-old from California, and Frances Tiafoe, a 26-year-old from Maryland, strode under the Arthur Ashe Stadium lights Friday night for the first U.S. Open semifinal matching two American men in 19 years, the crowd might have been forgiven for not knowing which to support.

There was a burst of clapping right before the initial point, a curtain-raiser befitting the show about to unfold. Once the contest got going, maybe the momentum shifts made it tough to choose between a pair of close pals who've known each other since they were playing tournaments for kids younger than 14.

In the end, the roars were for Fritz, who surged with a six-game run against a fading Tiafoe to come out on top 4-6, 7-5, 4-6, 6-4, 6-1 and reach his first Grand Slam final.

"It's the reason why I do what I do," Fritz told the fans, his voice cracking during a post-match interview. "It's the reason why I work so hard."

The No. 12-seeded Fritz's seventh victory in eight professional meetings against No. 20 Tiafoe earned a showdown against No. 1 Jannik Sinner for the championship on Sunday.

"He was overwhelming from the baseline so much ... and I just tried to tell myself to stay in it and fight," said Fritz, who was two games from losing in the fourth set. "I told myself that if I didn't give it absolutely everything I had — to just stick with it and see if his level might drop a little bit — then I was going to regret it for a long time."

He will be the first U.S. man to appear in a major final since Andy Roddick lost to Roger Federer at Wimbledon in 2009 — and the first in New York since Roddick lost to Federer there in 2006. If he can get past Sinner, Fritz would become the first American man to win any Slam trophy since Roddick got his 21 years ago at the U.S. Open.

"It's a dream come true. I'm in the final. So I'm going to come out and give everything I can possibly give," Fritz said. "I can't wait."

From 4-all in the fourth set, he seized control. Tiafoe's mind and legs betrayed him, as he cramped up, at least in part, because of what he said were nerves related to thinking the finish line was near and he was headed to play for the title.

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"I felt like my body shut down on me," said Tiafoe, who fell to 7-14 in five-setters. "I got ahead of myself." After his double-fault handed over a break to make it 4-0 in the fifth, more than three hours into the proceedings, Tiafoe chucked his racket. Fritz repaid the favor by double-faulting to end the next game, but broke right back and soon it was over. They met at the net for an embrace.

"Sometimes," Tiafoe said, "it's not meant to be."

Sinner, a 23-year-old from Italy exonerated in a doping case less than three weeks ago, finished off a 7-5, 7-6 (3), 6-2 victory over No. 25 Jack Draper on Friday that featured simultaneous treatment of both competitors by trainers deep in the 1 1/2-hour second set.

"It was a very physical match, as we see," said Sinner, who won the Australian Open in January. "I just tried to stay there mentally."

He got his left wrist massaged after falling during a point he managed to win; Draper needed medical attention after vomiting twice in a game with the temperature in the high 70s and the humidity above 60%. During that break in the action, a vacuum was used to clear the ground behind the baseline and finish the cleaning job Draper, a 22-year-old from Britain, tried to do himself by wiping his, um, mess with a towel.

There was none of that sort of drama away from the actual play in Tiafoe vs. Fritz.

"Ultimately," Tiafoe said, "it was a great night, to have two Americans battling."

The respective guest boxes seemed to reflect the players' contrasting personalities. The excitable Tiafoe would mark a key moment by shaking a raised fist or gritting his teeth or wagging his racket or nodding while strutting to the sideline, and his entourage — including coach David Witt, who worked with Venus Williams for many years, as well as Jessica Pegula, the American in the U.S. Open women's final Saturday against Aryna Sabalenka — stood and got noisy, point after point after point.

The group in the more mild-mannered Fritz's corner was more selective in its celebrations.

Fritz had never been past the quarterfinals at one of his sport's four most prestigious events until now, but this journey included wins over a trio of guys with a combined six Slam runner-up showings: Casper Ruud, Alexander Zverev and Matteo Berrettini.

Fritz started well Friday, smacking serves at up to 135 mph, before Tiafoe gathered himself and grabbed five games in a row. In the next set, Fritz was pretty much perfect, winning 24 of 25 service points and going 8 for 8 at the net. Tiafoe regrouped quickly, breaking to begin the third, which turned out to be enough for that set, because he never allowed Fritz so much as one break chance.

Tiafoe appeared to lose steam after losing one particular 31-stroke point — the longest of the match, he called it "definitely an intense rally" — midway through the fourth, then gave away that set's last game by double-faulting twice and netting a drop shot.

"This one's going to hurt really, really bad," Tiafoe said.

Maui's toxic debris could fill 5 football fields 5 stories deep. Where will it end up?

By CLAIRE RUSH and JENNIFER SINCO KELLEHER Associated Press

LAHAINA, Hawaii (AP) — Hinano Rodrigues remembers being 4 or 5 years old, carrying a bucket across a highway to the ocean in the Maui community where he still lives.

At dawn, he would accompany his grandmother to a reef at low tide, where she plucked black snails, spiny lobsters and spiky sea urchins from the craggy rock. In Hawaiian, she would instruct him to break off a branch of kiawe, a type of mesquite, to tease out an octopus hiding in a hole.

It taught Rodrigues, 71, the value of ahupuaa, a Native Hawaiian system for dividing land from the mountains down to the ocean, with the residents of each section living off the land and waters within it.

But now the section where he lives and where his ancestors have always lived — the Olowalu ahupuaa — is also home to a temporary landfill being used to store debris from the deadly wildfire that decimated the historic nearby town of Lahaina last summer, destroying thousands of buildings and killing 102 people. It's enough refuse to cover five football fields five stories high, including soil contaminated with lead and arsenic.

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A controversy over whether that site is truly temporary — and over where the debris might finally wind up — has sparked a fierce legal fight with tens of millions of dollars at stake, not to mention a priceless ecosystem rich with coral, manta rays and other sea life just offshore.

"Why would you go put opala like this in a place that's clean?" Rodrigues asked, using a Hawaiian word for trash.

Handling debris after large wildfires is always a logistical challenge. After the 2018 Camp Fire killed 85 people and burned down most of the town of Paradise, California, more than 300,000 truck loads were required to transport the debris to three different landfills, said Cole Glenwright, the deputy incident commander of the debris removal operation. The whole process took about a year.

It's taking much longer on Maui, given environmental concerns, how long it has taken to clear destroyed lots, worries about Native Hawaiian cultural sites, and tussling over the ownership of a potential permanent site for the debris.

The temporary landfill in Olowalu is a former quarry on state-owned land and close to Lahaina, which made it a convenient choice for quickly storing the debris being cleared away so the town can rebuild. Officials believe its arid climate will reduce the risk of contamination spreading, and they say they've taken many precautions, including using thick liner and stormwater controls to contain runoff.

Officials have analyzed samples of soil, groundwater and surface water and found no traces of contamination being released, according to a quarterly report released in July.

But the site is just uphill from a coral reef, and some locals fear an ecological catastrophe if pollution does reach the water.

The operation of the site also threatens sacred Hawaiian shrines and altars and desecrates ancient Hawaiian burial sites, according to a lawsuit filed by two people who don't want the debris in Olowalu. One of the plaintiffs is Manoa Ka'io Martin, whose ancestors are among those buried nearby. The other is farmer Eddy Garcia, who worries about contamination of the food he grows, including taro, bananas, pineapples and starfruit.

Amid demands to remove the debris from Olowalu, Maui County is seeking to seize a privately owned former quarry near the Central Maui Landfill across the island to use as a permanent dump site.

That's prompted another legal fight. The company that owns the land, Komar Maui Properties, doesn't want to give it up.

Komar bought the land in 2015 with plans to build a private landfill, but it says permitting issues have stalled development. It is contesting the county's effort to take the property by eminent domain — a process by which governments can seize private land for public use, with fair compensation for the owner. A federal judge has prevented the county from taking immediate possession while the lawsuit plays out.

Andy Naden, general counsel and executive vice president of Komar Investments, the parent company of Komar Maui Properties, says the county moved to seize its land only after learning the Federal Emergency Management Agency would pay "tipping fees" associated with disposing of the Lahaina debris — fees typically paid by weight to landfill owners. Maui County charges a tipping fee of nearly \$110 per ton for municipal solid waste.

"FEMA is going to dump 400,000 tons into this hole," Naden said. "That equates to \$44 million that the federal government is going to give to whoever has the hole."

Shayne Agawa, director of Maui's Department of Environmental Management, disputed that. He said his department has long been interested in acquiring the land as part of plans to expand the adjacent public landfill.

Agawa, who lives in Olowalu, said the county doesn't want the debris to remain at the temporary site. But it has yet to come up with a backup plan in case the court blocks the county from seizing Komar's land. Officials are looking at other nearby parcels, he said.

To respond to cultural concerns, Maui officials consulted with the county's archaeologist, Janet Six, and FEMA had one of its historic advisors assess the site. Six told The Associated Press she could not rule out the presence of ancient cultural sites or burial grounds, but noted that the area was previously disturbed by mining. FEMA found that no historic properties would be affected.

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The lawsuit filed by Garcia and Martin asserted that the construction and operation of the temporary dump has in fact damaged or desecrated such sites by exposing them to toxic material, in violation of Martin's spiritual practices.

Garcia said he feels uneasy as rumbling trucks haul debris up the road next to his farm. He worries one heavy bout of rain will cause toxins from the debris to contaminate the food he grows.

The pair dropped their lawsuit after the county announced plans for the permanent site in central Maui, but their lawyer is considering their next legal steps while the debris sits in Olowalu.

"I have a feeling they're going to try to make it permanent and just say, 'Sorry, we can't move it to the other site,'" Garcia said.

Further complicating the issue is that the ashes or bones of some fire victims might be mingled in the debris. Raenelle Stewart's 97-year-old grandmother died in the fire. Stewart often wonders if the ashes the family received contained all her remains. The fire debris should be kept nearby, she said.

"I think they should designate a spot in Lahaina for it," she said. "I don't think it's so toxic that the earth can't handle."

Randy Awo, a retired administrator in the state Department of Land and Natural Resources, is a Native Hawaiian resident of Maui. He'd prefer to have the debris shipped out of state — an option officials rejected as too expensive.

Awo called the concerns about remains "a sacred topic" and said he does not want to be insensitive to families who lost loved ones. But, he added, the community must also protect Maui's finite amount of land.

"When our environment is subjected to toxins that threaten life itself," Awo said, "we have to start making decisions that weigh both."

Harris and Trump are getting ready for Tuesday's debate in sharply different ways

By JOSH BOAK and JILL COLVIN Associated Press

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Kamala Harris and Donald Trump are veering sharply in how they gear up for Tuesday's presidential debate, setting up a showdown that reflects not just two separate visions for the country but two politicians who approach big moments very differently.

The vice president is cloistered in a historic hotel in downtown Pittsburgh where she can focus on honing crisp two-minute answers, per the debate's rules. She's been working with aides since Thursday and chose a venue that allows the Democratic nominee the option of mingling with swing-state voters.

Trump, the Republican nominee, publicly dismisses the value of studying for the debate. The former president is choosing instead to fill his days with campaign-related events on the premise that he'll know what he needs to do once he steps on the debate stage at the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia.

"You can go in with all the strategy you want but you have to sort of feel it out as the debate's taking place," he said during a town hall with Fox News host Sean Hannity.

Trump then quoted former boxing great Mike Tyson, who said, "Everybody has a plan until they get punched in the face."

Harris has said she is prepared for Trump to rattle off insults and misrepresent facts, even as her campaign has seen value in focusing on the middle class and the prospects of a better future for the country.

"We should be prepared for the fact that he is not burdened by telling the truth," Harris said in a radio interview for the Rickey Smiley Morning Show. "He tends to fight for himself, not for the American people, and I think that's going to come out during the course of the debate."

In her own preparation, Harris has the Democratic consultant Philippe Reines, a longtime aide to Hillary Clinton, portraying Trump. She likes to describe Trump as having a "playbook" of falsehoods to go after Democrats such as Clinton and former President Barack Obama.

Harris has said she understands Trump on a deeper psychological level. She has tried in speeches like her remarks at the Democratic National Convention to show that she would be a stronger leader than him — an argument that gets at Trump's own desire to project and show strength.

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Trump's June 27 debate against President Joe Biden shook up the election, with Biden's disastrous performance ultimately leading to him stepping aside as the Democratic nominee and endorsing Harris. Both campaigns know the first in-person meeting between Harris and Trump could be a decisive event in a tight race.

Trump is preemptively criticizing the ABC News debate moderators, claiming he will not be treated fairly. But he said he plans to let Harris speak, just as he did during his debate with Biden.

"I let him talk. I'm gonna let her talk," he said during the Hannity town hall.

Trump aides said that this time would be no different than the previous debate and that the former president would not be doing any more traditional prep. There are no stand-ins, no sets, no play-acting.

Instead, they point to Trump's frequent interviews, including taking questions at lengthy press conferences, sitting for hourlong podcasts, and participating in town halls with friendly hosts like Hannity.

Trump also meets regularly with policy advisers who are experts on issues that may come up during the debate. During these informal sessions, they talk about the issues, Trump's policies while he was in office, and the plans he's put forth for a second term.

"I have meetings on it. We talk about it. But there's not a lot you can do. You either know your subject or not. You either have good policy or not," he said in a New Hampshire radio interview.

Before the last debate Trump held sessions with notable Republicans like Florida Sen. Marco Rubio, who at the time was under consideration to be Trump's vice presidential pick. This time he has held sessions with Tulsi Gabbard, the former Democratic congresswoman and Democratic presidential candidate who is now backing Trump.

Gabbard, who is also now a member of Trump's transition team, was brought in specifically to help Trump this time around because she knows Harris, having debated her when the two were running for the Democratic nomination in 2020. She also hosted a recent town hall with Trump in Wisconsin.

Trump, aides insist, intends to put Harris on the defensive. He wants to portray her as too liberal as he tries to tie her to Biden's economic record and points out her reversals on issues such as a fracking ban that she no longer supports.

"We look forward for the opportunity for Americans to see her on stage, incapable of defending her policies and flip-flops," said Trump campaign spokeswoman Karoline Leavitt. "The president's proven he has a command of the issues, she does not."

Harris' team is banking that Trump will come off as extreme and that they can use the debate as a springboard to further build on the momentum that her short campaign has generated. The campaign plans to use the pre-debate weekend to hold 2,000 events with volunteers and reach more than one million voters.

"With hundreds of offices and thousands of staff across the battlegrounds, we are able to harness all the buzz around the debate and break through to hard-to-reach voters," said Dan Kanninen, the campaign's battleground states director, in a statement.

Cowabunga! New England town celebrates being the birthplace of the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles

By MICHAEL CASEY Associated Press

DOVER, N.H. (AP) — As the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles grew to become a pop culture sensation, the place where they were conceived rarely got mentioned.

It wasn't the New York City sewers, where the Turtles mutated from regular reptiles into a crime-fighting quartet who battled foes with nunchucks, snark and pizza. Rather, it was a small city near the New Hampshire coast.

A new exhibit hopes to put that community, Dover, New Hampshire, at the center of the Turtles' story and, in turn, attract Turtle-obsessed fans or anyone else who grew up reading the comics and watching Ninja Turtles movies and TV shows. At one point in the 1980s, the frenzy around the Turtles was called Turtlemania.

"It's the birthplace," said Kevin Eastman, who, along with Peter Laird, created the Teenage Mutant Ninja

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Turtles 41 years ago when the two shared a house in Dover. The first issue went on sale a year later. "That's where the Turtles were created. ... It is very historic and very important to us."

The Turtles' exhibit opened last month at the Woodman Museum, which houses an eclectic collection that includes a stuffed polar bear and a Victorian funeral exhibit replete with a horse-drawn hearse.

With its explosion of colors and cabinets full of action figures, the exhibit aims to be the place to go for all things Turtles.

It starts with franchise's humble beginnings in Dover, where the duo formed Mirage Studios, a play on the fact they were creating the first comic in their living room rather than an actual studio. Inspired by Eastman's fascination with turtles and martial arts, they came up with the crime-fighting Turtles and self-published their first comic in black and white.

"We hoped that one day we would sell enough copies of our 3,000 printed, \$1.50 comic books that we could pay my uncle back," Eastman said, adding that they had no intention of writing a second issue until fans asked for more.

"We loved our characters. We loved what we did. We told the best story we could. We hoped for the best," he continued. "But I also could never have imagined that one comic book would lead to any of this."

Ralph DiBernardo, whose store in nearby Rochester sells comics and games, was among the first to champion the Turtles. He knew Eastman and Laird from selling them comics and was the first person to sell their Turtles comic commercially after purchasing 500 copies. But he said at the time, it seemed more like a favor to friends than a business decision, with him thinking, "those guys are never going to make their money back."

"To watch them go from two struggling guys just barely getting by to becoming multi-millionaires, it's that American dream story that just never happens," said DiBernardo, who remains friends with the two artists.

The exhibit details the emergence of the Turtles as a global phenomenon, featuring pizza-obsessed characters with catchphrases such as "cowabunga" and "booyakasha."

Among the exhibit's highlights are a video game console where visitors can play Turtles arcade games, vinyl records of soundtracks from Turtles movies and signed, first-run Turtles comics, including some valued in the tens of thousands of dollars. The marketing power of the Turtles is also on display, with everything from Turtles-inspired Christmas ornaments, throw rugs and backpacks to a talking toothbrush.

In the middle of it all is a set of massive bronze statues depicting the four turtles — Leonardo, Michelangelo, Donatello and Raphael — along with the mutant rat and resident sage, Master Splinter. The display was one of 12 made as part of a fundraiser by Eastman to benefit a museum in Northampton, Massachusetts.

"The Ninja Turtles are a multi-billion-dollar international franchise, and they originated here in Dover," said Jonathan Nichols, the executive director of the Woodman Museum. "So, it was a no-brainer for us to incorporate the Ninja Turtles here. This gallery is really a celebration and the history of the turtles from their creation to today."

Eastman said the exhibit demonstrates the Turtles' widespread appeal, which he attributes to their heroic natures and that they operate almost like a family that bickers but also works better as a team. Fans also love that they are "four green, mutated turtles not of any race, creed or color."

"Anybody could be a Turtle," said Eastman, who now lives in Arizona but plans to attend a Manchester, New Hampshire, comic convention later this month. He said he loves "talking to the fans not only about what they love about their Turtle," but also "what their favorite Turtle is."

"I ask who they relate to. It tells a lot about their personality," he added.

The exhibit's opening is part of a larger effort, some say long overdue, by Dover to embrace the Turtles. A state historical marker went up next door to the museum last year recognizing Dover as the birthplace of the Ninja Turtles. A few blocks away, a decorative manhole was placed in front of an empty lot where the creators' house once stood.

"I grew up here in Dover and had no idea that I was actually growing up in the town where they were created," Nichols said. "So, once that really started being brought to the forefront, I think it was just a huge push in the town to really make that well known."

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Nichols said he has had a few super fans already visit decked out in Turtles' attire. But the other day, the exhibit was drawing visitors who had come to see other parts of the museum and found themselves going down memory lane with the Turtles.

"Just memories of the Turtles eating pizza," said Heidi Stephenson, who was visiting with her family from Canada.

David Sarge, a cook from Pennsylvania who was an avid comic book collector as a teenager, said the exhibit brought back memories of attending a Portsmouth, New Hampshire, comic convention where the first comic was sold. He purchased signed editions of the first two Turtles comics but allowed youthful exuberance to get in the way of what could eventually may have been a big payday.

"I traded them shortly thereafter for some reefer and I regret that to this day," he said with a laugh.

Biden's disastrous debate performance offers lessons for Harris and warnings for Trump

By CHRIS MEGERIAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The first sign of trouble came before the debate even started.

"Folks, how are you?" President Joe Biden said as he shuffled onto the stage. His voice was raspy and thin, his movements stiff. "Good to be here. Thank you."

It was an inauspicious glimpse of what would become a historic night. The first and last debate between Biden and Donald Trump started a chain reaction leading to Vice President Kamala Harris replacing Biden at the top of the Democratic ticket. She'll have her own chance in the spotlight Tuesday as she meets Trump in another debate. She's been hunkered down to prepare with her team, intent on maintaining the momentum that's breathed new life into Democrats' chances this year.

Trump, in a recent interview with a New Hampshire radio host, said he was prepared to face Harris after his encounter with Biden.

"He was not good," Trump said. "I hope she's not going to be good, too."

A look back at the June 27 debate holds lessons for Harris and warnings for Trump, whose rambling and occasional incoherence was overshadowed by Biden's stumbles.

The first hurdle is understanding the optics of the event.

Optics are important in debates

Ever since Richard Nixon lost the first televised presidential debate to John F. Kennedy in 1960, political experts have treated them like visual spectacles. Biden looked pale onstage and he appeared dazed, his mouth slightly agape, when Trump was talking.

"This is an Instagram, Facebook, TikTok society," said Michael LaRosa, a former spokesperson for first lady Jill Biden. "Visuals matter."

LaRosa said Harris needs to be poised at all times because images of her reacting to Trump's comments can be as potent as when it's her turn to talk. Her presentation will be closely scrutinized because she's less well-known than Trump's, meaning that Americans are still making up their minds about her.

Biden also struggled to make a lucid case for his platform or land solid attacks on Trump.

For example, during a question about the economy, Biden started talking about how the country could invest in education and social services if there were higher taxes on the wealthy. But he lost his train of thought and glanced down at his lectern. When he looked up, he inexplicably said, "Look, we finally beat Medicare."

He was out of time. "Thank you, President Biden," said Jake Tapper, one of the moderators.

As the camera caught Biden looking confused by his own answer, Trump pounced. "He beat it to death. And he's destroying Medicare."

Biden mangled his answers

The next topic was abortion, a galvanizing issue for Democrats after the U.S. Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade.

Trump spoke first, claiming that eliminating the national right to abortion was "something that everybody

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wanted."

"Every legal scholar, throughout the world, the most respected, wanted it brought back to the states. I did that," he said. "Now the states are working it out."

The answer was false and evasive, as Trump tried to simultaneously take credit for the anti-abortion movement's historic victory and dodge anger over the result.

Biden's response started succinctly.

"It's been a terrible thing what you've done," he said, adding that it was "ridiculous" to suggest there was a consensus around getting rid of Roe v. Wade. Biden said Trump's view was like saying that "we're going to turn civil rights back to the states, let each state have a different rule."

Then Biden veered off in an unexpected direction, perhaps prompted by Trump's support for exceptions to abortion bans if a woman is raped. He brought up Trump's concern about crimes committed by migrants, then said that "there's a lot of young women who are being raped by their in-laws, by their spouses, brothers and sisters."

"And when those women get pregnant, they can do nothing about it," Biden said. "And they try to arrest them when they cross state lines."

Paul Begala, a veteran Democratic strategist, described Biden's answer as bizarre.

"He took his strongest issue," meaning abortion, "and talked about his weakest issue," border security.

Democratic panic started early

They were 15 minutes into a 90-minute debate and, Begala said, "My phone was exploding with texts from other Democratic strategists who were saying, 'Oh my God, it's over.'"

After Biden tripped over an answer on immigration, Trump responded with mockery.

"I really don't know what he said at the end of that sentence," he said. "I don't think he knows what he said either."

While the debate was still underway, the White House said Biden was suffering from a cold. And in the days afterward, Biden said he had been dealing with jet lag from overseas travel.

But the damage was done. Biden had already been struggling to convince voters that he could serve as president until he was 86, which was how old he would be at the end of a second term. Now he had seemingly confirmed the country's worst fears about his fitness for office.

Begala said Harris' relative youth — she turns 60 next month — is an enormous benefit, particularly when Trump is 78.

"Every day that she wakes up and she's not 81, she's a break with Biden," he said.

Trump provides no shortage of vulnerabilities in debates. He's forceful but hyperbolic and frequently dishonest. Sometimes he rambles about his grievances, which might entertain his faithful fans at political rallies but is a poor fit for a one-on-one debate.

Former President Bill Clinton had his own advice for facing off with Trump — show that he's only out for himself.

"The next time you hear him, don't count the lies, count the I's," he said at the Democratic National Convention.

Venice Film Festival wrap-up: Awards, buzz and Kevin Costner's 'Horizon'

By LINDSEY BAHR AP Film Writer

VENICE, Italy (AP) — The 81st edition of the Venice Film Festival is coming to close Saturday, with the world premiere of Kevin Costner's "Horizon: An American Saga — Chapter 2" and the awards ceremony.

With no real consensus pick going into the evening, eyes are focused on what the Isabelle Huppert-led jury will bestow prizes upon this year. Many of the 21 titles playing in competition have been divisive, with passionate supporters and detractors.

Among the highest profile of the films up for the top prize include: Todd Phillips' "Joker: Folie à Deux," the not-a-musical-musical with Joaquin Phoenix and Lady Gaga ; Pablo Larraín's Maria Callas film "Maria,"

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starring Angela Jolie as the famed soprano; the erotic thriller "Babygirl" in which Nicole Kidman gets entangled in a complicated affair with an intern, played by Harris Dickinson; Luca Guadagnino's William S. Burroughs adaptation "Queer," with Daniel Craig as a junkie expat obsessed with a young student; Brady Corbet's 215-minute post-war epic about an architect and a Holocaust survivor rebuilding a life in America, "The Brutalist," starring Adrien Brody; and Pedro Almodóvar's English-language meditation on death and friendship, "The Room Next Door," starring Julianne Moore and Tilda Swinton.

Five years ago, the Venice jury surprised the film world by giving the Golden Lion to "Joker," which went on to win a best actor Oscar for Phoenix. Last year the top award went to "Poor Things" and the year before, the documentary "All the Beauty and the Bloodshed."

Though always a player in the international festival scene, Venice has cemented its reputation as a major launching pad for awards campaigns over the past 12 years. Since 2014, they've hosted four best picture winners ("Birdman," "Spotlight," "The Shape of Water" and "Nomadland") and 19 nominees. And buzz is already swirling about possible best actress nominations for Kidman and Jolie, actor for Craig and supporting actress for Gaga, as the fall film season kicks into full gear.

The festival this year marked a return to form with true A-listers back on the Lido to celebrate films both in and out of competition after last year's strike addled outing. In addition to the names above, George Clooney, Brad Pitt, Michael Keaton, Winona Ryder, Ethan Hawke, Sigourney Weaver were all lending their star power to the event.

And many rose to the occasion with their fashion. Gaga's Christian Dior gown paired with a vintage lace Philip Treacy headpiece made for a major red-carpet moment. As was Kidman's body hugging Schiaparelli, Blanchett's Armani Privé with strands of pearls cascading down her back, and Jolie with her fur stole. Rachel Weisz and Daniel Craig also played the power couple, with her in a glittery blue Versace gown and him in a cream Loewe suit. The "Beetlejuice Beetlejuice" cast did also did a spin on the movie's aesthetic with their wares.

The last major film premiering, out of competition, is the second part of Kevin Costner's self-financed passion project. The first installment had a glitzy premiere at the Cannes Film Festival earlier this year, but after that fizzled at the box office earlier this summer, the August release of "Chapter Two" was delayed. Instead, it would go the festival route as well.

Just how rare is a rare-colored lobster? Scientists say answer could be under the shell

By PATRICK WHITTLE Associated Press

BIDDEFORD, Maine (AP) — Orange, blue, calico, two-toned and ... cotton-candy colored?

Those are all the hues of lobsters that have showed up in fishers' traps, supermarket seafood tanks and scientists' laboratories over the last year. The funky-colored crustaceans inspire headlines that trumpet their rarity, with particularly uncommon baby blue-tinted critters described by some as "cotton-candy colored" often estimated at 1 in 100 million.

A recent wave of these curious colored lobsters in Maine, New York, Colorado and beyond has scientists asking just how atypical the discolored arthropods really are. As is often the case in science, it's complicated.

Lobsters' color can vary due to genetic and dietary differences, and estimates about how rare certain colors are should be taken with a grain of salt, said Andrew Goode, lead administrative scientist for the American Lobster Settlement Index at the University of Maine. There is also no definitive source on the occurrence of lobster coloration abnormalities, scientists said.

"Anecdotally, they don't taste any different either," Goode said.

In the wild, lobsters typically have a mottled brown appearance, and they turn an orange-red color after they are boiled for eating. Lobsters can have color abnormalities due to mutation of genes that affect the proteins that bind to their shell pigments, Goode said.

The best available estimates about lobster coloration abnormalities are based on data from fisheries

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sources, said marine sciences professor Markus Frederich of the University of New England in Maine. However, he said, "no one really tracks them."

Frederich and other scientists said that commonly cited estimates such as 1 in 1 million for blue lobsters and 1 in 30 million for orange lobsters should not be treated as rock-solid figures. However, he and his students are working to change that.

Frederich is working on noninvasive ways to extract genetic samples from lobsters to try to better understand the molecular basis for rare shell coloration. Frederich maintains a collection of strange-colored lobsters at the university's labs and has been documenting the progress of the offspring of an orange lobster named Peaches who is housed at the university.

Peaches had thousands of offspring this year, which is typical for lobsters. About half were orange, which is not, Frederich said. Of the baby lobsters that survived, a slight majority were regular colored ones, Frederich said.

Studying the DNA of atypically colored lobsters will give scientists a better understanding of their underlying genetics, Frederich said.

"Lobsters are those iconic animals here in Maine, and I find them beautiful. Especially when you see those rare ones, which are just looking spectacular. And then the scientist in me simply says I want to know how that works. What's the mechanism?" Frederich said.

He does eat lobster but "never any of those colorful ones," he said.

One of Frederich's lobsters, Tamarind, is the typical color on one side and orange on the other. That is because two lobster eggs fused and grew as one animal, Frederich said. He said that's thought to be as rare as 1 in 50 million.

Rare lobsters have been in the news lately, with an orange lobster turning up in a Long Island, New York, Stop & Shop last month, and another appearing in a shipment being delivered to a Red Lobster in Colorado in July.

The odd-looking lobsters will likely continue to come to shore because of the size of the U.S. lobster fishery, said Richard Wahle, a longtime University of Maine lobster researcher who is now retired. U.S. fishers have brought more than 90 million pounds (40,820 metric tons) of lobster to the docks in every year since 2009 after only previously reaching that volume twice, according to federal records that go back to 1950.

"In an annual catch consisting of hundreds of millions of lobster, it shouldn't be surprising that we see a few of the weird ones every year, even if they are 1 in a million or 1 in 30 million," Wahle said.

As US colleges raise the stakes for protests, activists are weighing new strategies

By JOCELYN GECKER, MARYCLAIRE DALE and MICHAEL CASEY Associated Press

University of Southern California law student Elizabeth Howell-Egan isn't allowed on campus because of her role in last spring's anti-war protests, but she is keeping up her activism.

She and like-minded students are holding online sessions on the Israel-Hamas war and passing out fliers outside the campus, which is now fortified with checkpoints at entrances and security officers who require students to scan IDs.

"Change is never comfortable. You always have to risk something to create change and to create a future that we want to live in," said Howell-Egan, a member of the school's Students for Justice in Palestine chapter, which is calling on USC to divest from companies profiting off the war.

The stakes have gone up this fall for students protesting the war in Gaza, as U.S. colleges roll out new security measures and protest guidelines — all intended to avoid disruptions like last spring's pro-Palestinian demonstrations and protect students from hate speech. Activism has put their degrees and careers at risk, not to mention tuition payments, but many say they feel a moral responsibility to continue the movement.

Tent encampments — now forbidden on many campuses — so far have not returned. And some of the more involved students from last spring have graduated or are still facing disciplinary measures. Still, ac-

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tivist students are finding other ways to protest, emboldened by the rising death toll in Gaza and massive protests this month in Israel to demand a cease-fire.

Tensions over the conflict have been high on American campuses since the war began on Oct. 7, when Hamas-led militants killed 1,200 people in Israel and took 250 hostage. The war in Gaza has killed more than 40,000 people, according to Gaza health officials.

As the pro-Palestinian demonstrations took off nationally, Jewish students on many campuses have faced hostility, including antisemitic language and signs. Some colleges have faced U.S. civil rights investigations and settled lawsuits alleging they have not done enough to address antisemitism.

A desire 'to be part of something'

Temple University senior Alia Amanpour Trapp started the school year on probation after being arrested twice last semester during pro-Palestinian protests. Within days, she was back on the university's radar for another demonstration.

As she reflects on the fallout from her activism, she thinks of her grandfather, a political prisoner killed in 1988 massacres orchestrated by Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini.

"He paid the ultimate price for what he believed in. And so I feel like the least I can do is stand my ground and face it," she said.

Trapp, a political science major, devotes much of her time outside classes to Students for Justice in Palestine, which led her to the back-to-school protest on Aug. 29. The group of a few dozen protesters made several stops, including outside the Rosen Center, a hub of Jewish life that is home to Temple's Hillel Chapter.

Some Jewish students inside said they were shaken by the demonstration. Protesters used megaphones to direct chants toward people inside, Temple President Richard Englert said. The university called it intimidation and opened an investigation.

"Targeting a group of individuals because of their Jewish identity is not acceptable and intimidation and harassment tactics like those seen today will not be tolerated," Englert said.

Trapp said they were not out to intimidate anyone, but to condemn Hillel for what she called its support of Zionism. "To the students inside that felt threatened or harmed, I'm sorry," she said.

Trapp is appealing a Temple panel's ruling that she violated the college's conduct code last spring. As she reflects on the discipline, she recalls a Temple billboard she saw on Interstate 95 after her first visit to campus.

"Because the world won't change itself," the ad beckoned. It reassured her that Temple was the right fit. "I so badly wanted to be part of something, you know, meaningful," she said, "a community committed to change."

A renewed push for divestment

At Brown University, some students who were arrested last spring are taking another tack to pressure the Ivy League school to divest its endowment from companies with ties to Israel.

Last spring, the university committed to an October vote by its governing board on a divestment proposal, after an advisory committee weighs in on the issue. In exchange, student protesters packed up their tents.

Now students including Niyanta Nepal, the student body president who was voted in on a pro-divestment platform, say they intend to apply pressure for a vote in favor of divestment. They are rallying students to attend a series of forums and encouraging incoming students to join the movement.

Colleges have long rebuffed calls to divest from Israel, which opponents say veers into antisemitism. Brown already is facing heat for even considering the vote, including a blistering letter from two dozen state attorneys general, all Republicans.

Rafi Ash, a member of the Brown University Jews For Ceasefire Now and Brown Divest Coalition, declined to say what activism might look like if the divestment push fails. A Jewish student who was among 20 students arrested during a November sit-in at an administrative building, Ash dismisses critics who see the anti-war protests as antisemitic.

"The Judaism I was taught promotes peace. It promotes justice. It promotes 'tikkun olam' — repairing the world," said Ash, who is on disciplinary probation. "This is the most Jewish act I can do, to stand up

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for justice, for everyone."

Barred from campus, but strategizing on protests

For Howell-Egan, the crackdown at USC and her suspension only deepened her desire to speak out.

"Even with this threat of USC imposing sanctions and disciplinary measures, I am at peace with it because I am standing up for something that is important," Howell-Egan said. "There are no more universities in Gaza. We are in an incredibly privileged position for this to be our risk."

She is not allowed to attend in-person classes because she was suspended in May for joining protests at the private school in Los Angeles.

There has been a trend of heavier punishments for students engaging in activism than in the past, including banishment from campus and suspensions that keep students "in limbo for months," said Tori Porell, an attorney with the nonprofit Palestine Legal, which has supported student protesters facing disciplinary measures. Howell-Egan sees it as part of a strategy to stifle free speech.

In a memo this month, USC President Carol Folt said the campus has seen peaceful protests and marches for years. "However, the spring semester brought incidents that tested our values, disregarded our policies, sparked fears, and required unprecedented safety measures," she said.

For now the focus of the USC Divest Coalition, which includes several student organizations, has moved off campus, to incorporate the wider community and take a cautious approach as students get a handle on the university's new rules, Howell-Egan said.

In addition to the community outreach, students have been holding teach-ins.

"The idea is to raise our skill set and our understanding of where we stand in this moment, and where we are in this fight," Howell-Egan said, "especially as we continue with it."

Man charged with plotting shooting at a New York Jewish center on anniversary of Oct. 7 Hamas attack

By PHILIP MARCELO Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — A Pakistani man was arrested in Canada this week and accused of plotting a mass shooting at a Jewish center in Brooklyn on the one-year anniversary of the Oct. 7 attack by Hamas that sparked the latest conflict in the Middle East, federal authorities announced Friday.

U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland said Muhammad Shahzeb Khan had attempted to travel from Canada, where he lives, to New York City with the "stated goal of slaughtering, in the name of ISIS, as many Jewish people as possible."

The 20 year-old, who is also known as Shahzeb Jadoon, was apprehended Sept. 4 and charged with attempting to provide material support and resources to the terror group, which stands for the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham.

"Jewish communities — like all communities in this country — should not have to fear that they will be targeted by a hate-fueled terrorist attack," Garland said in a statement.

It was unclear if Khan has a lawyer, where in Canada he was being held and when he may be brought to the U.S. to face the charges.

Spokespersons for the Justice Department and the Manhattan federal prosecutor's office, which is handling the case, deferred to Canadian national police, which didn't respond to an email seeking comment but said in a statement posted online that Khan will appear in the Superior Court of Justice in Montreal on Sept. 13.

"This planned antisemitic attack against Jewish people in the U.S. is deplorable and there is no place for such ideological and hate-motivated crime in Canada," Michael Duheme, commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, said in the statement.

U.S. authorities said Khan began sharing ISIS propaganda videos and expressing his support for the terror group in social media posts and communications with others on an encrypted messaging app last November.

In conversations with two undercover law enforcement officers, he said he was trying start a "real offline

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cell" of ISIS in order to carry out attacks against "Israeli Jewish chabads" in America. Khan said he and another ISIS supporter based in the U.S. needed to obtain AR-style assault rifles, ammunition, hunting knives and other materials, according to the Justice Department.

Khan also provided details about how he would cross the border from Canada and said he was considering conducting the attacks on either the Oct. 7 anniversary or on Oct. 11, which is the Jewish holiday of Yom Kippur, authorities said.

On Aug. 20, he told the undercover officers that he had settled on targeting New York because of its sizeable Jewish population and sent a photograph of the specific area inside a Jewish center where he planned to carry out the attack, according to the Justice Department.

His online messages described the Brooklyn site, which is not named in court documents, as "the ultra orthodox hasidic jews world headquarters," according to authorities.

A spokesperson for the Chabad-Lubavitch, an influential Hasidic Jewish movement headquartered Brooklyn's Crown Heights section, didn't immediately comment Friday.

Khan began making his way to the U.S. on Wednesday morning from the Toronto area in a car that also picked up additional passengers, according to the federal complaint unsealed Friday.

The group switched cars around Nepean and again around Montreal, before their vehicle was eventually stopped around Ormstown, a town in the province of Quebec that is about 12 miles (19 kilometers) from the international border, the complaint states.

RFK Jr. notches wins in North Carolina and Michigan in his effort to get off ballots

By GARY D. ROBERTSON Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — Robert F. Kennedy Jr. scored a pair of legal victories Friday in the battleground states of North Carolina and Michigan, and a setback in Wisconsin, in his quest to get his name off of the ballots in some states after he suspended his campaign and endorsed former President Donald Trump.

North Carolina's intermediate-level Court of Appeals issued an order granting Kennedy's request to halt the mailing of ballots that included his name, upending plans in the state just as officials were about to begin sending out the nation's first absentee ballots for the Nov. 5 presidential election.

The court — a three-judge panel ruling unanimously — also told a trial judge to order the State Board of Elections to distribute ballots without Kennedy's name on them. No legal explanation was given.

In Michigan, its intermediate-level Court of Appeals ruled that Kennedy should be removed from the ballot, reversing a decision made earlier this week by a lower court judge.

And in Wisconsin, a Dane County circuit court judge denied Kennedy's request for a temporary restraining order to put on hold the state elections commission's decision to keep him on the ballot.

"A matter of such consequence deserves a full development of the record with appropriate briefing by all sides," Judge Stephen Ehlke wrote. He set a scheduling conference for Wednesday, a week before the deadline for the printing of ballots.

In separate statements, a Kennedy attorney praised the North Carolina and Michigan rulings, saying they uphold state elections laws and support ballot integrity by ensuring no one must vote for a candidate no longer running in their state.

A favorable outcome for Kennedy could assist Trump's efforts to win North Carolina, Michigan and Wisconsin.

North Carolina law required the first absentee ballots to be mailed or transmitted to those already asking for them no later than 60 days before the general election, making Friday the deadline. The process of reprinting and assembling ballot packages likely would take more than two weeks, state attorneys have said.

The State Board of Elections formally asked the state Supreme Court late Friday to reverse the Court of Appeals decision. State lawyers asked the justices to act quickly before adjustments to the ballots ordered earlier Friday is complete — likely in a few days. Five of the seven Supreme Court justices are registered Republicans.

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Kennedy, the nominee of the We The People party in North Carolina, had sued last week to get off the state's ballots after he suspended his campaign and endorsed Trump. But the Democratic majority on the State Board of Elections rejected the request, saying it was too late in the process of printing ballots and coding tabulation machines. Kennedy then sued.

Wake County Superior Court Judge Rebecca Holt on Thursday denied Kennedy's effort to keep his name off ballots, prompting his appeal. In the meantime, Holt had told election officials to hold back sending absentee ballots until noon Friday.

More than 136,300 people — military and overseas workers and in-state civilian residents — have requested North Carolina absentee ballots so far, the State Board of Elections said late Friday.

In an email, state board Executive Director Karen Brinson Bell told election directors in all 100 counties to preserve current ballots and coding in case rulings revert to keeping Kennedy on the ballot. More than 2.9 million absentee and in-person ballots with Kennedy's name on them had been printed. Counties would have to pay for the cost of reprinting ballots.

With Friday's deadline not met, North Carolina election officials still are faced with meeting a federal law requiring absentee ballots go to military and overseas voters by Sept. 21. They may try to seek a waiver if new ballots can't be produced in time.

Friday's ruling in North Carolina didn't include the names of Court of Appeals judges who considered Kennedy's request — the court releases the names after 90 days. The court has 15 judges — 11 registered Republicans and four Democrats. Names usually have been withheld from such orders to discourage "judge shopping," or purposefully seeking out a judge who's likely to rule in your favor, the court has said.

Kennedy sued Democratic Michigan Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson on Aug. 30 to get off the ballot. He filed suit in Wisconsin on Wednesday.

Friday's ruling from Michigan said that while Kennedy's request was made close to the deadline to give notice to local election officials, it wasn't so unreasonable as to deny relief to him. Benson's office will appeal the decision to the state Supreme Court, a spokesperson said.

Former Vice President Dick Cheney says he will vote for Kamala Harris

By MEAD GRUVER Associated Press

CHEYENNE, Wyo. (AP) — Former Vice President Dick Cheney, a lifelong Republican, will vote for Kamala Harris for president, he announced Friday.

Liz Cheney, who herself endorsed Harris on Wednesday, first announced her father's endorsement when asked by Mark Leibovich of The Atlantic magazine during an onstage interview at The Texas Tribune Festival in Austin.

"Wow," Leibovich replied as the audience cheered.

Like his daughter, Dick Cheney has been an outspoken critic of former President Donald Trump, notably during Liz Cheney's ill-fated reelection campaign in 2022.

Dick Cheney put out a statement Friday confirming his endorsement, which read almost entirely as opposition to Trump rather than support of Harris.

"He can never be trusted with power again," the statement said. "As citizens, we each have a duty to put country above partisanship to defend our Constitution. That is why I will be casting my vote for Vice President Kamala Harris."

Trump responded on his Truth Social platform by calling the former vice president "an irrelevant RINO, along with his daughter." The acronym stands for "Republican in name only."

Asked for comment, Trump spokesperson Steven Cheung said, "Who is Liz Cheney?"

The campaign confirmed Cheung was being sarcastic by also pointing to a comment Liz Cheney posted online four years ago in which she called Harris a "radical liberal."

Jen O'Malley Dillon, Harris' campaign chair, released a statement saying, "The Vice President is proud to have the support of Vice President Cheney, and deeply respects his courage to put country over party."

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Dick Cheney, 83, has made few if any public appearances over the past year or more. He has dealt with heart issues since his 40s and underwent a heart transplant in 2012.

Dick Cheney's statement Friday was similar to a 2022 campaign ad for Liz Cheney as she sought a fourth term as Wyoming's lone congressperson. In it, he called Trump a "coward" for trying to "steal the last election using lies and violence to keep himself in power after the voters had rejected him."

The ad did little good for his daughter in a deep-red state that once held the Cheney family dear but is now thoroughly in Trump's corner. By a more than 2-to-1 margin, Liz Cheney lost her Republican primary to Trump-endorsed attorney Harriet Hageman.

Dick Cheney has been friends with Democrats over the years but never supported one for president.

Both Cheneys backed Trump in 2016, but after Liz Cheney criticized Trump foreign policy decisions and Trump criticized the "endless wars" in Afghanistan and Iraq launched when Dick Cheney was vice president, their support waned.

If either Cheney supported Trump in 2020, they were mum about it. Meanwhile, their home state of Wyoming that year delivered Trump his widest margin of victory.

By 2021, Liz Cheney's vote to impeach Trump and her investigation into him for the 2021 U.S. Capitol riot made them irredeemable to Trump — and soon most of the GOP.

There were exceptions. One was Cheney ally Rep. Adam Kinzinger of Illinois, a Republican Trump critic who earlier this year endorsed Biden and spoke in support of Harris at the Democratic National Convention in August.

Several other top Republicans have come out in support of Harris while some, including Sen. Mitt Romney and former Vice President Mike Pence, say they won't be voting for Trump.

Of them only Romney, who is not seeking reelection, is still in office.

Walz says Gaza demonstrators are protesting for 'all the right reasons' while condemning Hamas

By COLLEEN LONG Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Vice presidential candidate Tim Walz said Thursday that those protesting American support for Israel's war against Hamas in Gaza are doing so for "all the right reasons," as the Democratic ticket looks to balance its support for Israel with the humanitarian plight of civilians in the war-torn enclave.

Walz' comments came in an interview with a local Michigan public radio station — a state with a large Muslim American population that is also a potentially pivotal swing state in this November's election. His comments appeared to mark tonal shift, though not a policy one, from the steadfast support for Israel that Vice President Kamala Harris espoused at the Democratic National Convention last month.

Walz said the Oct. 7 attack by Hamas that touched off the war, was "a horrific act of violence against the people of Israel. They certainly have the right to defend themselves." But, he also said that, "we can't allow what's happened in Gaza to happen. The Palestinian people have every right to life and liberty themselves."

During the interview, Walz was also asked how a Harris administration might handle the nearly 11-month Israel-Hamas conflict and whether she would break with President Joe Biden, who has supported Israel while working to broker a ceasefire and a deal to release hostages held by Hamas.

Walz made no mention of the six hostages, including American Hersh Goldberg-Polin, who were executed last week in Gaza by Hamas as Israeli forces drew near. Nor did he mention the protests that involve violence and vandalism and are frequently directed at Jewish Americans.

Walz has, in other settings, spoken about the hostages, including in a social media post earlier this week where he wrote: "The anguish of losing a child is something no family should have to endure. ... Hamas is a brutal terrorist organization — and we condemn their continued atrocities against both Americans and Israelis in the strongest possible terms."

Harris, who has spoken more passionately of the plight of Palestinians civilians in Gaza than Biden, has pledged to continue longstanding support for Israel. In a statement after the hostages' bodies were identified, Harris said that the "threat Hamas poses to the people of Israel—and American citizens in Is-

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rael—must be eliminated” and that “ Hamas cannot control Gaza.”

Speaking at a vigil for the hostages at his synagogue in Washington on Tuesday, Harris’ husband Doug Emhoff said, “I haven’t been able to stop thinking about Hersh and his parents, or about the five others and their families.” He added: “This is hard. I feel raw. I’m gutted.”

Although the vice president has appeared more forceful in speaking about the plight of civilians in Gaza, she and Biden are in step on his efforts to arm Israel and bring about a hostage deal and ceasefire. Harris and Biden met earlier this week in the White House Situation Room with the U.S. hostage deal negotiating team.

Harris’ campaign, meanwhile, has stepped up its outreach to Arab and Muslim American leaders in Michigan, aiming to make up ground with a community that had grown exasperated with Biden after they felt months of outreach had not yielded many results. Some have expressed a willingness to listen while others have had initial conversations with Harris’ team.

Harris previously said that it was important to remember “the war in Gaza is not a binary issue. However, too often the conversation is binary, when the reality is anything but.”

Hostage families have accused Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of blocking a deal and potentially sacrificing their loved ones to hold a strip along Gaza’s border with Egypt, called the Philadelphia corridor. Hundreds of thousands of Israelis this week took to the streets and called for a deal, saying time is running out to bring hostages home alive.

Biden said this week they are still negotiating.

Biden signs ‘common sense’ order prioritizing federal grants for projects with higher worker wages

By JOSH BOAK and MATT BROWN Associated Press

ANN ARBOR, Mich. (AP) — President Joe Biden on Friday signed an executive order for federal grants that will prioritize projects with labor agreements, wage standards, and benefits such as access to child care and apprenticeship programs.

Biden said the ideas in his order “are common sense.”

“Economists have long believed that these good job standards produce more opportunities, better outcomes for workers and more predictable outcomes for businesses as well,” he said from an Ann Arbor, Michigan union training center where he made the announcement. “A good union job is building a future worthy of your dreams.”

The Biden administration is trying to make the case that economic growth should flow out of better conditions for workers. His administration has stressed the vital role that organized labor will likely play for Democrats in November’s election. In her matchup against Republican Donald Trump, Vice President Kamala Harris is depending on backing from the AFL-CIO and other unions to help turn out voters in key states.

Biden has prided himself on his support of labor unions, joining striking Michigan union workers on the picket line last year. On Friday, he came on stage to chants of “Thank you, Joe!”

Trump has tried to make inroads with organized labor as well by having Teamsters President Sean O’Brien speak at the Republican National Convention. The Teamsters have yet to formally endorse any candidate, though Harris is expected to meet with them.

Biden said that under his administration “we buy American. And we’re making sure federal projects are made in America projects.”

Some in the construction industry criticized the order for possibly increasing construction costs and excluding non-unionized workers from projects.

“These policies steer taxpayer-funded infrastructure contracts to unionized businesses and create jobs exclusively for union members at the expense of everyone else and the rule of law,” said Ben Brubeck, an executive with Associated Builders and Contractors, a construction industry trade group.

The order will establish a task force to coordinate policy development with the goal of ensuring more benefits for workers. The administration’s funding for infrastructure, computer chip manufacturing and

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the development of renewable energy sources has led to a wave of projects.

By the administration's count, its incentives have prompted \$900 billion worth of private-sector investments in renewable energy and manufacturing. Those commitments have yet to resonate much with voters who are more focused on the lingering damage caused by inflation spiking in 2022, but many projects will take several years to come to fruition.

Though he wasn't in Michigan for a campaign event, Biden spoke on his predecessor, saying that Trump would much rather "cross a picket line than walk one."

"My predecessor believed America is a failing nation," Biden said, mentioning an oft-repeated complaint by the president about a 2020 report that Trump had referred to American war dead at the Aisne-Marne American Cemetery in France in 2018 as "losers" and "suckers."

Trump has denied the report.

"I'm glad I wasn't there," Biden said. "I think I would have done something. I think you would have, too."

Biden added: "He's the sucker. He's the loser."

Biden's late son Beau died from cancer in 2015. The president has blamed burn pits for the brain cancer. Burn pits are where chemicals, tires, plastics, medical equipment and human waste were disposed of on military bases and were used in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"I'm sorry to get emotional like that. But I miss him," Biden said before turning his focus back to to union workers, calling them heroes.

Judge delays Donald Trump's sentencing in hush money case until after November election

By MICHAEL R. SISAK and JENNIFER PELTZ Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Donald Trump's sentencing in his hush money case has been postponed until after the November election, granting the former president a hard-won reprieve as he navigates the homestretch of his current campaign and the aftermath of his criminal conviction.

In a decision Friday, Manhattan Judge Juan M. Merchan delayed Trump's sentencing until Nov. 26, three weeks after the final votes are cast in the U.S. presidential election. The sentencing had been scheduled for Sept. 18, about seven weeks before Election Day.

The delay is the latest bit of good fortune for Trump in an election season that has been laden with legal perils for him.

The new date means voters will choose their next president without knowing whether the Republican nominee is going to jail, nor whether he will even be sentenced at all. Merchan now plans to rule Nov. 12 on Trump's request to overturn the verdict and toss out the case because of the U.S. Supreme Court's July presidential immunity ruling.

Merchan explained that he was postponing the sentencing "to avoid any appearance — however unwarranted — that the proceeding has been affected by or seeks to affect the approaching presidential election in which the Defendant is a candidate."

"The Court is a fair, impartial and apolitical institution," he added, writing that his decision "should dispel any suggestion" otherwise.

Trump — fresh from watching appellate arguments in a sexual abuse lawsuit against him in a nearby federal court — heralded the hush money sentencing delay. In a post on his Truth Social platform, he called the case a "witch hunt" and a "political attack" and reiterated that he'd done nothing wrong.

"This case should be rightfully terminated, as we prepare for the Most Important Election in the History of our Country," he wrote.

Prosecutors said they stood ready for sentencing on the new date.

"A jury of 12 New Yorkers swiftly and unanimously convicted Donald Trump of 34 felony counts," said Danielle Filson, a spokesperson for Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg. He is a Democrat.

Trump's lawyers pushed for the delay on multiple fronts, petitioning the judge and asking a federal court to intervene. They argued that punishing the former president in the thick of his campaign to retake the

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White House would amount to election interference.

Prosecutors didn't take a position on Trump's delay request, deferring to Merchan.

A federal judge on Tuesday rejected Trump's request to have the U.S. District Court in Manhattan seize the case from Merchan's state court. Trump is appealing the federal court decision and has asked appeals judges to halt postconviction proceedings.

Trump entered this election year facing the possibility of multiple criminal trials after he was indicted four times since March 2023. But a string of decisions in the last two months, culminating with Friday's sentencing delay, has largely cleared his legal calendar. The hush money case is the only one to have gone to trial.

In July, a judge dismissed a federal case in Florida charging Trump with illegally hoarding classified documents. The Supreme Court's immunity decision has ensured significant delays in a separate federal case in Washington, D.C., in which Trump's accused of trying to overturn his 2020 election loss. A Georgia election case also remains idled.

The immunity ruling reins in prosecutions of ex-presidents for official acts and restricts prosecutors in pointing to official acts as evidence that a president's unofficial actions were illegal.

Election Day is Nov. 5, but many states allow voters to cast ballots early, with some set to start the process just a few days before or after Sept. 18.

Trump is the first ex-president convicted of a crime. A jury in May found him guilty of 34 counts of falsifying business records to conceal a \$130,000 hush money payment to porn actor Stormy Daniels just before the 2016 presidential election. Daniels claims she and Trump had a sexual encounter a decade earlier after they met at a celebrity golf tournament in Lake Tahoe.

Prosecutors cast the payout as part of a Trump-driven effort to keep voters from hearing salacious stories about him during his first presidential campaign. Trump's former lawyer Michael Cohen paid Daniels and was later reimbursed by Trump, whose company logged the reimbursements as legal expenses.

Trump maintains that the stories were false and that the reimbursements were for legal work and logged correctly. He has pledged to appeal the verdict, but that cannot happen until he is sentenced.

Democrats backing their party's presidential nominee, Vice President Kamala Harris, have made his conviction a focus of their messaging.

In speeches at the party's convention in Chicago last month, President Joe Biden called Trump a "convicted felon" running against a former prosecutor. Rep. Jasmine Crockett, D-Texas, labeled Trump a "career criminal, with 34 felonies, two impeachments and one porn star to prove it."

Trump's 2016 Democratic opponent, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, inspired chants of "lock him up" from the convention crowd when she quipped that Trump "fell asleep at his own trial, and when he woke up, he made his own kind of history: the first person to run for president with 34 felony convictions."

Falsifying business records is punishable by up to four years behind bars. Other potential sentences include probation, a fine or a conditional discharge, which would require Trump to stay out of trouble to avoid additional punishment.

Trump's case "stands alone, in a unique place in this Nation's history," Merchan wrote.

The public's confidence "in the integrity of our judicial system demands a sentencing hearing that is entirely focused on the verdict of the jury and the weighing of aggravating and mitigating factors free from distraction or distortion," he wrote.

Sluggish US jobs report clears the way for Federal Reserve to cut interest rates

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Hiring by America's employers picked up a bit in August from July's tepid pace, and the unemployment rate dipped for the first time since March in a sign that the job market may be cooling but remains sturdy.

Employers added a modest 142,000 jobs, up from a scant 89,000 in July, the Labor Department said Friday. The unemployment rate ticked down to 4.2% from 4.3%, which had been the highest level in nearly

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three years. Hiring in June and July, though, was revised sharply down by a combined 86,000. July's job gain was the smallest since the pandemic.

"The labor market is weakening," said Eugenio Aleman, chief economist at Raymond James Financial. "It is not falling apart, but it is weakening."

The cooling jobs figures underscore why the Federal Reserve is set to cut its key interest rate when it next meets Sept. 17-18, with inflation falling steadily back to its target of 2%. Still, Friday's mixed jobs data raises the question of how large a rate cut the Fed will announce. It could decide to reduce its benchmark rate by a typical quarter-point or by a larger-than-usual half-point. In the coming months, the policymakers will also decide how much and how fast to cut rates at their subsequent meetings.

Christopher Waller, an influential Fed policymaker, suggested in a speech Friday that the central bank is leaning toward a quarter-point reduction this month. But he left the door open for larger rate cuts, if necessary, later this year.

"I do not expect this first cut to be the last," Waller said in a speech at the University of Notre Dame. "With inflation and employment near our longer-run goals and the labor market moderating, it is likely that a series of reductions will be appropriate."

"I am open-minded," he added, "about the size and pace of cuts, which will be based on what the data tell us about the evolution of the economy."

Waller also said the economy and job market are still growing, "and the prospects for continued growth and job creation are good," a sign that for now, he thinks a quarter-point reduction is appropriate for the Fed's first rate cut.

Collectively, Friday's figures depict a job market slowing under the pressure of high interest rates but still growing. Many businesses appear to be holding off on adding jobs, in part because of uncertainty about the outcome of the presidential election and about how fast the Fed will reduce its benchmark rate in the coming months.

Daniel Zhao, lead economist at the career website Glassdoor, said some of the details in the August jobs report indicate that businesses' demand for workers is slowing. The number of Americans who are working part time but would prefer full-time work rose, extending a year-long trend.

"When you look under the hood, you're seeing numbers that confirm that the job market is on that cooling trajectory," Zhao said.

America's labor market is now in an unusual place: Jobholders are mostly secure, with layoffs low, historically speaking. Yet with the pace of hiring having weakened, landing a job has become harder.

Christopher Millan, an out-of-work operations manager in Miami, has found the job market to be much more unforgiving than it was when he last looked for work in 2022. Millan, 34, who was laid off in February from an interactive-kiosk company, has since applied for more than 1,000 jobs. He has landed just a few interviews and received no offers.

Two years ago, he said, it took just a few months for him to find a new position.

He recently heard of an open job in his field from a friend. But after applying, he was told that the company had instituted a hiring freeze until fall. Millan said he thinks many companies are reluctant to fill their open jobs because they're uncertain about the economy's outlook.

"I feel like everyone is battenning down the hatches," he said. "It's very frustrating."

Over the past three months, job growth has averaged only 116,000 a month, down sharply from an average of 211,000 a year ago. Over time, that may not be enough to keep up with growth in the number of people looking for work, economists say. An influx of immigrants in the past three years has enlarged the nation's workforce.

And August's job gains were concentrated in just a few industries, with health care adding 44,000 jobs, restaurants, hotels and entertainment companies gaining 46,000, and construction 34,000. Steady hiring by restaurants and hotels could reflect ongoing gains in consumer spending, which rose last month even after adjusting for inflation. Manufacturers and retailers cut jobs in August.

In a major speech last month, Chair Jerome Powell suggested that the Fed's policymakers have all but tamed inflation through high interest rates and don't want to see the job market weaken further. The

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central bank is trying to achieve a "soft landing," in which it succeeds in driving inflation down from a 9.1% peak in 2022 to its target level without causing a recession. A lower Fed benchmark rate will lead eventually to lower borrowing costs for a range of consumer and business loans, including mortgages, auto loans and credit cards.

For now, companies are posting fewer job openings and adding fewer workers, while Americans are far less likely to quit their jobs now than they were soon after the economy rebounded from the pandemic. In a strong job market, workers are more likely to quit, usually for higher-paying opportunities. With quits declining, it means fewer jobs are opening up for people out of work.

Becky Frankiewicz, North American president of the staffing firm ManpowerGroup, said that uncertainty around the presidential election and the Fed's next moves are causing many companies to hold back on new investments and hiring.

"There's a whole world waiting to see what happens with our election," she said. "We have this great waiting game. No one wants to make big moves yet."

Still, Frankiewicz said the job market appears to be stable for now.

"The bottom isn't falling out, and we're not seeing a rocket ship," she said. "It's stability."

A slower pace of hiring is often a precursor to layoffs — one reason why the Fed's policymakers are now more focused on sustaining the health of the job market than on continuing to fight inflation.

The Fed's Beige Book, a collection of anecdotes from the 12 regional Fed banks, reported that many employers appeared to have become pickier about whom they hired in July and August. And a survey by the Conference Board in August found that the proportion of Americans who think jobs are hard to find has been rising, a trend that has often correlated with a higher unemployment rate.

At the same time, consumer spending, the principal driver of economic growth in the United States, rose at a healthy pace in July. And the economy grew at a solid 3% annual pace in the April-June quarter.

Election 2024 Latest: Judge postpones sentencing in Trump's hush money case until after the election

By The Associated Press undefined

A judge has agreed to postpone Donald Trump 's sentencing in his New York hush money case until after the November election.

Judge Juan M. Merchan said in his decision Friday that he wanted to avoid any perception that the sentence was intended to tilt the scales in the presidential campaign. The judge delayed Trump's sentencing until Nov. 26.

Earlier in the day, Trump spoke before television cameras on Friday following a court appearance and brought up a string of past allegations of other acts of sexual misconduct, lashing out at the women who came forward. Although billed as a news conference, the former president took no questions.

Meanwhile, Vice President Kamala Harris largely stayed out of the public eye, preparing in private with her advisers in Pittsburgh for next week's debate with Trump. Her campaign announced Friday that it raised \$361 million from nearly 3 million donors in her first full month as a candidate.

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

Here's the latest:

Dick Cheney will back Kamala Harris, his daughter says

Former Vice President Dick Cheney, a lifelong Republican, will vote for Kamala Harris for president, his daughter former U.S. Rep. Liz Cheney said Friday.

Liz Cheney, who herself endorsed Harris on Thursday, made the announcement when asked by Mark Leibovich of The Atlantic magazine during an onstage interview at The Texas Tribune Festival in Austin.

"Dick Cheney will be voting for Kamala Harris," Liz Cheney said to audience cheers during the interview at The Texas Tribune Festival in Austin.

"Wow," Leibovich replied.

Like his daughter, Dick Cheney has been an outspoken critic of former President Donald Trump, notably

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during Liz Cheney's ill-fated re-election campaign in 2022.

American company, Russian propaganda: New Kremlin tactic reveals escalating effort to sway US vote
WASHINGTON — Russia has long sought to inject disinformation into U.S. political discourse. Now, it's got a new angle: paying Americans to do the work.

This week's indictment of two Russian state media employees on charges that they paid a Tennessee company to create pro-Russian content has renewed concerns about foreign meddling in the November election while revealing the Kremlin's latest tactic in a growing information war.

If the allegations prove correct, they represent a significant escalation, analysts say, and likely capture only a small piece of a larger Russian effort to sway the election.

"We have seen the smoke for years. Now, here's the fire," said Jim Ludes, a former national defense analyst who now leads the Pell Center for International Relations at Salve Regina University. "I don't wonder if they're doing more of this. I have no doubt."

☐ [Read more here.](#)

Wisconsin judge rules against RFK Jr.'s latest request in bid to have his name removed from ballots

MADISON, Wis. — A Wisconsin judge ruled against Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s request for a temporary restraining order on Friday in a bid to get his name removed from Wisconsin's presidential ballot after the state elections commission voted to keep him on it.

Dane County Circuit Judge Stephen Ehlke ruled that "a matter of such consequence deserves a full development of the record with appropriate briefing by all sides." He set a scheduling conference for Wednesday, a week before the deadline for the printing of ballots.

Some election officials have already printed ballots, creating another hurdle for Kennedy.

He is one of eight presidential candidates on Wisconsin's ballot as approved by the state elections commission.

It's not just Harris and Trump who have a lot at stake in next week's debate. ABC News does, too

Hours after ABC News released the rules for next Tuesday's presidential debate, resolving a final dispute in Donald Trump's favor, the former president was on the attack — against ABC News.

"I think a lot of people will be watching to see how nasty they are, how unfair they are," he said Wednesday on a Fox News town hall.

It was an unsubtle reminder that Trump and Kamala Harris aren't the only ones with a lot at stake next week. The same is true for ABC News and moderators David Muir and Linsey Davis, in what is the only scheduled debate between the presidential contenders this fall.

Multiple outlets will televise and stream it. But unlike in past years, when presidential debates were organized by a bipartisan commission, this is solely an ABC News production. It won't include a live audience.

☐ [Read more here.](#)

Judge delays Donald Trump's sentencing in hush money case until after November election

A judge has agreed to postpone Donald Trump's sentencing in his New York hush money case until after the November election.

Judge Juan M. Merchan said in his decision Friday that he wanted to avoid any perception that the sentence was intended to tilt the scales in the presidential campaign. The judge delayed Trump's sentencing until Nov. 26. That will mean that people casting votes in the presidential election won't know Trump's punishment, or whether he will be sentenced to jail.

The sentencing had been scheduled for Sept. 18.

Trump had asked the court for a delay and prosecutors said they didn't necessarily oppose one.

☐ [Read more here.](#)

Carroll's attorney says 'all options are on the table' following Trump's comments

Writer E. Jean Carroll's attorney, Roberta Kaplan, had a speedy response Friday to fresh comments former President Donald Trump made about her client that sounded like the kinds of things he said that led juries to conclude he owes Carroll \$88.3 million.

"I've said before and I'll say it again: all options are on the table," Kaplan said in a statement shortly after Trump spoke at length during a Trump Tower news conference in midtown Manhattan.

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Whenever Trump denies that he sexually assaulted Carroll, he runs the risk she will sue him again for defamation.

Juries have twice awarded Carroll huge sums after Trump claimed she made up a story about him sexually abusing her in a department store dressing room in the spring of 1996 to help her sell a memoir.

That hasn't stopped Trump from continuing to make nearly identical statements to reporters. At his news briefing Friday, he said again that Carroll was telling a "made-up, fabricated story."

Trump says woman who accused him of molesting her on a flight 'would not have been the chosen one'

In one of the most startling moments of the news conference, Trump said that a woman who accused him of molesting her on an airline flight in the late 1970s "would not have been the chosen one" while saying she made up the story.

Trump is referring to an accusation made by Jessica Leeds, who testified last year in the same case that Trump grabbed her chest and ran his hand up her skirt as they sat side by side in first class on a New York City-bound jet.

"Think of the impracticality of this. I'm famous, I'm in a plane. People are coming into the plane, and I'm looking at a woman, and I grab her and I start kissing her and making out with her. What are the chances of that happening?" he said. "And frankly, I know you're going to say it's a terrible thing to say, but it couldn't have happened. It didn't happen. And she would not have been the chosen one."

Trump calls legal cases against him 'fake'

Donald Trump claimed without evidence Friday that the lawsuit brought against him was for political reasons and accused the Department of Justice of being behind this and other cases against him and called it a "political interference" and a "witch hunt."

"I'm running for president, and I have all these cases all of a sudden come," he said. "And they're fake cases."

He was convicted on 34 felony counts in a separate New York state case related to hush money payments allegedly made to a porn actor. The judge in that case is expected to decide on Friday whether to postpone Trump's sentencing.

"That case is a disgrace. I did nothing wrong," he said.

FACT CHECK: Every time Trump denies that he sexually assaulted columnist, he runs the risk that she'll sue again for defamation

Every time Trump denies that he sexually assaulted E. Jean Carroll, he runs the risk she will sue him again for defamation.

Juries now have twice awarded Carroll huge sums for claiming she made up a story about him attacking her in a department store dressing room in 1996 to help her sell a memoir.

But that hasn't stopped Trump from continuing to make nearly identical statements to reporters. At his news briefing Friday, he said again that Carroll was telling a "made-up, fabricated story."

Carroll's lawyer, Roberta Kaplan, warned in March after a jury awarded Carroll another \$83 million that she would continue to monitor Trump's comments and would consider suing again if he kept it up.

Trump criticizes verdict that found him liable for sexually abusing a columnist in 1996

In a news conference in New York on Friday, former President Donald Trump criticized a verdict that found him liable for sexually abusing a columnist in 1996 and repeated that he never met, touched or would have had any interest in the woman who brought the lawsuit against him.

"It's an appeal of a ridiculous verdict of a woman I have never met," he said. "I have no idea who she is," he said.

Trump claimed E. Jean Carroll fabricated the story inspired by a "Law and Order" episode.

"It's so false. It's a made-up, fabricated story by somebody, I think, initially, just looking to promote a book," he added.

North Carolina court orders RFK Jr.'s name off state ballots for president

A North Carolina appeals court on Friday directed that Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s name be taken off state ballots for president, blocking the planned distribution of absentee ballots later in the day in what would

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have been the first sent out nationally for the Nov. 5 elections.

The intermediate-level Court of Appeals issued an order granting the request of Kennedy's attorneys to halt the mailing of ballots with his name. The court also told a trial judge to issue an order telling the State Board of Elections to distribute ballots without Kennedy's name on the ballot.

State law otherwise required the first absentee ballots be mailed or transmitted no later than 60 days before the general election, which was Friday. The process of reprinting and assembling ballot packages likely would take over two weeks, state attorneys have said. Friday's ruling could be appealed.

Kennedy, named earlier this summer the nominee of the We The People party, had sued last week to get off North Carolina ballots after he suspended his campaign and endorsed Republican nominee Donald Trump. But the Democratic majority on the State Board of Elections rejected the request, saying it was too late in the process of printing ballots and coding tabulation machines.

Trump appears in court as his lawyers try to overturn verdict in sex abuse suit

NEW YORK — Former President Donald Trump appeared in court on Friday as his team tries to overturn a verdict finding him liable for sexual abuse and slander. Trump walked in quietly and passed right in front of writer E. Jean Carroll, who brought the lawsuit against him, and did not acknowledge or look at her.

Trump reacted at times such as shaking his head when Roberta Kaplan, Carroll's attorney, said that Trump sexually assaulted her client. He would tilt his head from side to side periodically but otherwise sat still and mostly alone.

When the hearing concluded, Trump stood up and his lawyers approached him briefly. He did not appear to say anything, then looked up and stood for a few moments before walking out of the courtroom.

From stirring to cringey: Memorable moments from past presidential debates

It could be a well-rehearsed zinger, a too-loud sigh — or a full performance befuddled enough to shockingly end a sitting president's reelection bid.

Notable moments from past presidential debates demonstrate how the candidates' words and body language can make them look especially relatable or hopelessly out-of-touch — showcasing if a candidate is at the top of their policy game or out to sea. Will past be prologue when Vice President Kamala Harris and former President Donald Trump debate in Philadelphia on Tuesday?

"Being live television events, without a script, without any way of knowing how they are going to evolve — anything can happen," said Alan Schroeder, author of "Presidential Debates: 50 years of High-Risk TV."

□ Read more about some highs, lows and curveballs from presidential debates past.

New DNC billboards in North Carolina target Trump ahead of his planned visit

The Democratic National Committee is up with new digital billboards in the battleground state of North Carolina as former president and GOP nominee Donald Trump plans to visit the state for a meeting of law officers.

The DNC says its digital billboards are running in half a dozen locations around Charlotte, where Trump is slated to speak later Friday at a gathering of the Fraternal Order of Police.

One bears only the text "TRUMP 2024" and "CONVICTED FELON." Another notes the "140 Police Officers Assaulted" at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, along with what Trump has said about wanting to "Pardon the Capitol rioters."

A third billboard says that the Project 2025 plan "Gives Trump Virtually Unchecked Legal Power."

Feds to observe Tuesday's primary election in Rhode Island city

The Justice Department announced Friday it will send federal observers to Pawtucket, Rhode Island, to ensure compliance with federal voting rights laws in Tuesday's primary election.

This comes after federal prosecutors filed a lawsuit earlier this year alleging the city failed to make voting information, forms, instructions and ballots available in Spanish, violating sections of the federal Voting Rights Act.

A federal court in May approved a consent decree to resolve the claims. The decree also addressed a claim that Pawtucket election officials didn't allow voters to cast a provisional ballot or properly train poll workers on provisional ballots, violating a section of the Help America Vote Act.

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The agency regularly sends observers to monitor compliance with federal civil rights laws in elections in communities across the country.

Harris raised \$361 million in August from nearly 3 million donors, campaign says

Vice President Kamala Harris raised well more than double what former President Donald Trump took in from donors in August, her campaign announced Friday, saying it raised \$361 million from nearly 3 million donors in her first full month as a candidate.

Trump's team announced Wednesday he brought in \$130 million over the same period. Harris' team says it ended the month with \$404 million on hand for the final sprint to Election Day, \$109 million more than Trump's campaign says it had at the end of August.

The massive Harris war chest is being used to fund a \$370 million paid media effort for the final two months of the campaign, and to pay for its more than 2,000 field staff spread through more than 310 offices in battleground states.

Harris' fundraising builds on the \$310 million she raised in July, the overwhelming majority of which came in after she took over President Joe Biden's campaign after he dropped out that month. The ticket swap has helped the Democratic party reverse the fundraising edge Trump had developed in the prior months when voter doubts about Biden's fitness for another term dampened donor — and voter — enthusiasm.

☐ [Read more here.](#)

Donald Trump returns to North Carolina to speak at Fraternal Order of Police meeting

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Donald Trump is returning to the battleground state of North Carolina Friday to address a meeting of the Fraternal Order of Police as he tries to portray himself as tougher on crime than his Democratic opponent, Vice President Kamala Harris, in the campaign's closing months.

Trump is scheduled to address FOP's National Board of Trustees fall meeting in Charlotte. The FOP, the world's largest organization of law enforcement officers, endorsed Trump's reelection bid in 2020, with its president saying on behalf of its 373,000 members that Trump had "made it crystal clear that he has our backs."

The imagery of the former president and GOP nominee in a room of law enforcement officers offers Trump the platform to contrast their support with his characterization of Harris, a former San Francisco district attorney and California attorney general whom Trump has called the "ringleader" of a "Marxist attack on law enforcement" across the country.

☐ [Read more here.](#)

Walz says a ceasefire, return of hostages is only way forward in Israel-Hamas war

Democratic vice presidential candidate Tim Walz was asked on WCMU in Michigan Thursday how a Harris administration would handle the Israel-Hamas war and whether his running mate would break with President Joe Biden, who has steadfastly supported Israel while working to broker a ceasefire.

Walz said the Oct. 7 attack by Hamas that touched off the war, was "a horrific act of violence against the people of Israel. They certainly have the right to defend themselves."

But, he said, "we can't allow what's happened in Gaza to happen. The Palestinian people have every right to life and liberty themselves."

He said those protesting the war in Michigan were speaking out for "all the right reasons."

He said the only way forward was a ceasefire and return of hostages. He didn't mention the revelation earlier this week that six additional hostages had been killed by Hamas.

JD Vance pedals Trump's message on mass deportations

Republican vice presidential candidate JD Vance is promoting Donald Trump's plans to deport people living in the country illegally at record levels.

The Ohio senator spoke to a friendly crowd of about 300 people at a Phoenix hotel, saying a second Trump administration would "finish that beautiful border wall," stop releasing asylum seekers while they await a court hearing and end Medicare benefits for people living in the country illegally, though unauthorized immigrants are not currently eligible for Medicare.

"I have a message from Donald J. Trump," Vance said. "If you are in this country illegally in six months,

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pack your bags.”

Judge OKs prosecutors’ request to lay out fresh evidence in Trump election case

The federal election interference case against Donald Trump is inching forward.

A judge on Thursday permitted prosecutors to file court documents later this month that could detail unflattering allegations about the former president as the Republican nominee enters the final weeks of his White House run.

The order came hours after a court hearing in which U.S. District Judge Tanya Chutkan sparred with a Trump lawyer who accused the government of trying to rush ahead with an “illegitimate” indictment in the run-up to the 2024 presidential election.

Chutkan made clear she would not let the upcoming election affect how she proceeds. She turned aside defense efforts to delay the process while also acknowledging that the case is nowhere close to a trial date.

Prosecutors and defense lawyers are bitterly at odds over the next steps in the case after the Supreme Court narrowed the scope of the prosecution by ruling that former presidents are entitled to broad immunity from criminal charges. The case against Trump charges him with plotting to overturn the results of the 2020 election in the run-up to the Capitol riot on Jan. 6, 2021.

Special counsel Jack Smith’s team filed a revised indictment last week to strip out certain allegations against Trump for which the Supreme Court said the former president enjoyed immunity. Defense lawyers, however, believe that that indictment did not fully comply with the justices’ ruling.

January 6 crimes did happen. Court cases, video and thousands of pages of evidence prove it

By MICHAEL KUNZELMAN, ALANNA DURKIN RICHER and CAL WOODWARD undefined

WASHINGTON (AP) — Inside Washington’s federal courthouse, there’s no denying the reality of Jan. 6, 2021. Day after day, judges and jurors silently absorb the chilling sights and sounds from television screens of rioters beating police, shattering windows and hunting for lawmakers as democracy lay under siege.

But as he seeks to reclaim the White House, Donald Trump continues to portray the defendants as patriots worthy of admiration, an assertion that has been undercut by the adjudicated truth in hundreds of criminal cases where judges and juries have reached the opposite conclusion about what history will remember as one of America’s darkest days.

The cases have systematically put on record — through testimony, documents and video — the crimes committed, weapons wielded, and lives altered by physical and emotional damage. Trump is espousing a starkly different story, portraying the rioters as hostages and political prisoners whom he says he might pardon if he wins in November.

“This is not normal,” U.S. District Judge Royce Lamberth, who was nominated to the federal bench in Washington by Republican President Ronald Reagan, wrote in court papers. “This cannot become normal. We as a community, we as a society, we as a country cannot condone the normalization of the January 6 Capitol riot.”

There are no broadcast television cameras inside the E. Barrett Prettyman federal courthouse on Constitution Avenue. But the real story of Jan. 6 is found in the reams of evidence and testimony judges and juries have seen and heard behind the doors of the courthouse where hundreds of Trump’s supporters have been convicted in the attack.

The Associated Press has spent more than three years tracking the nearly 1,500 Capitol riot cases brought by the Justice Department. AP reporters have reviewed hours of video footage and thousands of pages of court documents. They have witnessed dozens of court hearings and trials for the rioters who descended on the Capitol and temporarily halted the certification of President Joe Biden’s victory.

It’s unclear whether Trump will ever stand trial at the same courthouse in the federal case alleging he illegally schemed to overturn his 2020 election loss in the run-up to the violence. The Supreme Court’s ruling that former presidents have broad immunity from prosecution means a trial won’t happen before

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the election. If he wins, he could appoint an attorney general who could seek dismissal of the case, or potentially order a pardon for himself.

In Trump's telling, the mob on Jan. 6 assembled peacefully to preserve democracy, not upend it, and the rioters were agitated but not armed. They were not insurrectionists but rather 1776-style "patriots." And now they are being persecuted by the Justice Department, juries and judges for their political beliefs.

His relentless attempts to rewrite history have become foundational to the Republican's bid for another term, with campaign rallies honoring the rioters as heroes while an anthem plays in their name.

He was an invited guest for a "J6 Awards Gala" fundraiser at his golf club in Bedminster, New Jersey, for those charged with crimes connected to the riot. His campaign later said he wouldn't attend the fundraiser, which was then postponed. Organizers did not respond to requests for comment.

When pressed during a recent event, Trump said he "absolutely" would pardon rioters who assaulted police — if they were "innocent." When the interviewer noted she was talking about convicted rioters, Trump replied that they were convicted "by a very tough system."

It's part of an effort to undermine faith in the nation's justice system that has escalated since Trump's conviction on 34 felony charges in his New York hush money trial. Even more than that, it's fuel for a campaign of vengeance Trump says will come if he wins.

"Those J6 warriors, they were warriors, but they were really more than anything else — they're victims of what happened," Trump said in a rally after his conviction. Falsely claiming the rioters were "set up" by police, he appeared to threaten revenge: "That blows two ways, that blows two ways, believe me."

In response to several questions from the AP about Trump's support of the Jan. 6 defendants and pledge to pardon the rioters, Trump campaign spokesperson Karoline Leavitt said in an email: "Kamala Harris and Joe Biden's Department of Justice has spent more time prosecuting President Trump and targeting Americans for peacefully protesting on January 6th than criminals, illegal immigrants, and terrorists who are committing violent crimes in Democrat-run cities every day."

Many Republicans have lined up behind Trump to minimize the violence and push these lies: Police welcomed the mob into the building. Undercover FBI operatives and left-wing antifa activists instigated the attack. His running mate, JD Vance, has echoed Trump's claims that Jan. 6 defendants are being treated unfairly, referring to them in a 2022 social media post as "political prisoners," and describing their "captivity" as "an assault on democracy."

The disinformation campaign has taken root in a vast swath of the country. About a year after the attack, only about 4 in 10 Republicans recalled it as very violent or extremely violent, according to an Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research poll. Three years after the riot, a Washington Post-University of Maryland poll found about 7 in 10 Republicans said too much is being made of it.

And now some of the same lawmakers who blamed Trump for the riot are supporting his bid to return to the White House. Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell endorsed Trump's campaign this year after condemning the former president as "morally responsible" for what McConnell called a "failed insurrection."

Over 900 people have pleaded guilty to crimes, and approximately 200 others have been convicted at trial. More than 950 people have been sentenced, with roughly two-thirds getting time behind bars — terms ranging from a few days to 22 years.

To be sure, not all members of the mob engaged in violence. Hundreds of people who went into the Capitol but did not attack police or damage the building were charged only with misdemeanors. And the Justice Department has dropped a felony obstruction charge in some cases after the Supreme Court ruled in June that prosecutors applied it too broadly.

Investigators have documented a number of firearms in the crowd, along with knives, a pitchfork, a tomahawk ax, brass knuckle gloves and other weapons. One rioter was captured on camera firing a gun into the air outside the Capitol. Others used makeshift weapons to attack police, including flagpoles, a crutch and a hockey stick.

Judges and juries have heard police officers describe being savagely attacked while defending the building. All told, about 140 officers were injured that day, making it "likely the largest single day mass assault

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of law enforcement" in American history, Matthew Graves, the U.S. attorney for Washington, has said.

Trump has said no one was killed on Jan. 6. In fact, a Trump supporter, Ashli Babbitt, was fatally shot by police while trying to climb through the broken window of a barricaded Capitol doorway. Authorities cleared the officer of any wrongdoing after an investigation. Three other people in the crowd died of medical emergencies. At least four officers who were at the Capitol later died by suicide. And Capitol Police Officer Brian Sicknick collapsed and died after engaging with the protesters. A medical examiner later determined he died of natural causes.

Juries have watched videos of rioters calling for violence against then-Vice President Mike Pence and select lawmakers. They've seen far-right extremists in the run-up to the riot talk of civil war and revolution. They've heard congressional aides recount running to safety as the mob roamed the halls in search of then-House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and others.

And judges have watched hundreds of rioters admit to breaking the law, many expressing remorse for falling for Trump's stolen election lies — falsehoods he continues to spread. Some rioters have defiantly parroted Trump's rhetoric in court, with at least two defendants shouting "Trump won!" after learning their sentences.

Lamberth said in his nearly four decades on the bench, he "cannot recall a time when such meritless justifications of criminal activity have gone mainstream."

"I have been shocked to watch some public figures try to rewrite history, claiming rioters behaved 'in an orderly fashion' like ordinary tourists, or martyring convicted January 6 defendants as 'political prisoners' or even, incredibly, 'hostages,'" the judge wrote in court papers.

"That is all preposterous. But the Court fears that such destructive, misguided rhetoric could presage further danger to our country."

Trump assails women who accused him of misconduct, days before his debate with Harris

By JILL COLVIN, MICHELLE L. PRICE and WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Shortly after appearing in court for an appeal of a decision that found him liable for sexual abuse, Donald Trump stepped in front of television cameras Friday and brought up a string of past allegations of other acts of sexual misconduct, potentially reminding voters of incidents that were little-known or forgotten.

The former president has made hitting back at opponents and accusers a centerpiece of his political identity, but his performance at his namesake Manhattan office tower was startling even by Trump's combative standards.

At times, he seemed to relish using graphic language and characterizations of the case brought by advice columnist E. Jean Carroll, which could expose the former president to further legal challenges from Carroll's attorneys. His remarks were especially striking given that they came four days before Trump will debate Vice President Kamala Harris, with early voting about to begin in some parts of the country and Election Day just two months away.

Trump is doing his best to stay in the public eye while Harris prepares for the debate in private, meeting with her advisers in Pittsburgh. That's a reflection of their divergent campaign styles, with Trump frequently engaging with reporters — albeit often in friendly settings — while Harris has done just one interview and no news conferences since taking President Joe Biden's place atop the Democratic ticket.

His team had billed Friday's appearance as a press conference and Trump repeatedly brought up Harris' lack of news conferences. But Trump took no questions and instead talked about the cases against him for an hour while hardly mentioning any campaign issues.

"I'm running for president, and I have all these cases all of a sudden come," he said. "And they're fake cases."

Trump's campaign raised tens of millions of dollars off his previous indictments, convictions and appear-

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ances in court. But it's unclear how focusing on his legal woes will help him now as he works to win over undecided voters — including independents and those on the fence in critical swing states, ahead of a critical debate on Tuesday that will likely draw tens of millions of viewers.

Trump has disregarded his aides' advice to focus on policy

Trump's trying to seize the political offensive by bringing up allegations against him recalled 2016 when, in the weeks before Election Day, he attempted to dismiss as simple "locker room talk" a recording of him bragging about grabbing, forcibly kissing and sexually assaulting women, which triggered subsequent allegations of misconduct by a string of women.

But on Friday, standing inside Trump Tower, where he lived for decades before moving to Florida, Trump had many moments that evoked a more distant past.

He suggested women have accused him of wrongdoing because he is famous. He made a trio of references to how he was already famous in some circles in the 1970s, and talked about his work in the real estate and construction worlds in the 1980s — before millions of today's voters were born. At one point, he referenced the New York Post's famous "Page Six" gossip section, whose writers have spent decades covering him, as being the internet of its day.

Trump called Carroll's case against him "Monica Lewinsky Part II," referencing the then-White House intern who had a sexual relationship with President Bill Clinton, and recalled an infamous dress that played a pivotal role in the late-1990s impeachment proceedings against Clinton.

The former president also repeatedly implied he would not have assaulted two of his accusers due to their looks. He said of a woman who has accused him of sexual misconduct on a plane in the 1970s "she would not have been the chosen one," and of Carroll, "I never touched her. I would have had no interest in meeting her in any way, shape or form."

Harris, a former California attorney general, says frequently of her opponent's criminal record, "I know Donald Trump's type." She had no public schedule as she continued debate preparation on Friday, but has built her campaign partly around the idea of prosecuting the case against him — and the accusations Trump brought up Friday could give her more lines of political attack.

Trump's supporters and aides have urged him to focus on policy contrasts with Harris instead of personal attacks during the final stretch of a race that remains extremely close.

But, as Trump spoke, two of his top political advisers were on a call with Republican members of Congress, criticizing the media as being too soft on Harris while saying they felt confident about the race for the White House. Instead, the former president was flanked by his lawyers, some of whom also spoke in defense of their client.

Trump faces unprecedented criminal and civil jeopardy for a major candidate

His comments came after Trump was in court to hear his lawyers argue for overturning a jury's \$5 million verdict finding him liable of sexually abusing Carroll in 1996.

Juries now have twice now awarded Carroll huge sums for Trump's claiming she made up a story about him attacking her in a department store dressing room to help her sell a memoir. But that hasn't stopped Trump from continuing to make nearly identical statements to reporters. On Friday, he said again that Carroll was telling a "made up, fabricated story."

Carroll's lawyer, Roberta Kaplan, warned in March after a jury awarded Carroll another \$83 million that she would continue to monitor Trump's comments and would consider suing again if he kept it up. In a speedy response to his Friday comments at Trump Tower, Kaplan said in a statement, "I've said before and I'll say it again: All options are on the table."

In the meantime, Trump faces unprecedented criminal and civil jeopardy for a major-party nominee.

He has separately been convicted on 34 felony counts in a New York state case related to hush money payments allegedly made to a porn actor. The judge in that case announced separately Friday that he would postpone sentencing until after Election Day on Nov. 5.

Trump has also been ordered to pay steep civil fines for lying about his wealth for years.

And he's still contending with cases alleging his mishandling of classified documents, his actions after the 2020 election and his activities during the insurrection at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021 — though none are likely to go to trial prior to Election Day.

A dormitory fire in Kenya kills 18 students and injures 27. Dozens are unaccounted for

By EVELYNE MUSAMBI Associated Press

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) — A fire in a school dormitory in Kenya has killed 18 students and 27 others have been hospitalized, with 70 children unaccounted for, the country's deputy president said Friday.

President William Ruto declared three days of mourning during which flags will be flown at half-staff in honor of the children who died.

Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua said only 86 out of more than 150 children had been accounted for, and urged community members who may have sheltered some of them to help account for them.

Gachagua said that one more student had died at the hospital and that 37 pupils had been reunited with their parents so far.

The cause of the fire Thursday night at Hillside Endarasha Primary school in Nyeri County was being investigated, police spokesperson Resila Onyango said. The school serves children up to the age of 14.

Nyeri County Commissioner Pius Murugu and the education ministry reported that the dormitory that caught fire housed more than 150 boys between ages 10 and 14. Since most of the buildings are made from wooden planks, the fire spread quickly.

The mixed day and boarding private school, which has 824 students, is located 200 kilometers (125 miles) north of the capital, Nairobi, in the country's central highlands, where wooden structures are common.

Nyeri County Gov. Mutahi Kahiga told journalists that rescue efforts were hampered by muddy roads caused by rains in the area.

Anxious parents who had been unable to find their children among the survivors waited at the school, engulfed with grief.

The parents were overcome by emotions after they were allowed to view the scene of the fire.

John Rukwaro told journalists that his 11-year-old grandson was missing and he had checked with area hospitals without success.

The education ministry's permanent secretary, Belio Kipsang, said that the government was working with the school administration to account for all the children in the boarding section.

"We are asking the parents who picked up their children and the community to support us as we consolidate the numbers to ensure that we account for every child who was boarding in this school," he said.

Ruto called the news "devastating."

"I instruct relevant authorities to thoroughly investigate this horrific incident. Those responsible will be held to account," he said in an X post.

His deputy, Rigathi Gachagua, urged school administrators to ensure that safety guidelines recommended by the education ministry for boarding schools are being followed.

School fires are common in Kenyan boarding schools, often caused by arson fueled by drug abuse and overcrowding, according to a recent education ministry report. Many students board because parents believe it gives them more time to study without long commutes.

Some fires have been started by students during protests over the workload or living conditions. In 2017, 10 high school students died in a school fire in Nairobi started by a student.

Kenya's deadliest school fire in recent history was in 2001 when 67 students died in a dormitory fire in Machakos county.

The education ministry's guidelines recommend that dormitories should be spacious enough and have two doors on each end, an emergency door in the middle and that windows aren't fitted with grills in order to allow for escape in case of fire. Fully serviced fire extinguishers and fire alarms are required at easily accessible spots.

It wasn't immediately clear if these guidelines were followed at Hillside school and the area near the dormitory has remained cordoned off.

Teen charged in Georgia school shooting and his father to stay in custody after hearings

By JEFF AMY and JEFF MARTIN Associated Press

WINDER, Ga. (AP) — The 14-year-old suspect in a shooting that killed four people at a Georgia high school and his father, who was arrested for allowing his son to have a weapon, will stay in custody after their lawyers decided not to seek bail Friday.

Colt Gray, who has been charged with four counts of murder, is accused of using a semiautomatic assault-style rifle to kill two fellow students and two teachers Wednesday at Apalachee High School in Winder, outside Atlanta. His father, Colin Gray, faces related charges in the latest attempt by prosecutors to hold parents responsible for their children's actions in school shootings.

"You don't have to have been physically injured in this to be a victim," District Attorney Brad Smith said outside the Barrow County courthouse. "Everyone in this community is a victim. Every child in that school was a victim."

The father and son appeared in back-to-back hearings Friday morning with about 50 onlookers in the courtroom, where workers had placed boxes of tissues along the benches, in addition to members of the media and sheriff's deputies. Some victims' family members in the front row hugged each other and one woman clutched a stuffed animal.

During his hearing, Colt Gray, wearing khaki pants and a green shirt, was advised of his rights as well as the charges and penalties he faced for the shooting at the school where he was a student. He was escorted out in shackles at the wrists and ankles.

The judge then called the teen back to the courtroom to correct an earlier misstatement that his crimes could be punishable by death. Because he's a juvenile, the maximum penalty he would face is life without parole.

Shortly afterward, Colin Gray was brought into court dressed in a gray-striped jail uniform. Colin Gray, 54, was charged Thursday in connection with the shooting and answered questions in a barely audible croak, giving his age and saying he finished 11th grade, earning a high school equivalency diploma.

Colin Gray has been charged with involuntary manslaughter and second-degree murder related to the shooting. Arrest warrants said he caused the deaths of others "by providing a firearm to Colt Gray with knowledge that he was threat to himself and others."

The charges come five months after Michigan parents Jennifer and James Crumbley were the first convicted in a U.S. mass school shooting. They were sentenced to at least 10 years in prison for not securing a firearm at home and acting indifferently to signs of their son's deteriorating mental health before he killed four students in 2021. The Georgia shootings have also renewed debate about safe storage laws for guns and have parents wondering how to talk to their children about school shootings and trauma.

The hearings for the father and son came as police in the Atlanta suburb of Dunwoody said schools there and nationwide have received threats of violence since the Apalachee High School shooting, police said in a statement. The Georgia Bureau of Investigation also noted that numerous threats have been made to schools across the state this week.

According to arrest warrants obtained by The Associated Press, Colt Gray is accused of using a "black semi-automatic AR-15 style rifle" in the rampage. Authorities have not offered any motive or explained how he obtained the gun or got it into the school.

He was charged as an adult in the deaths of Mason Schermerhorn and Christian Angulo, both 14, Richard Aspinwall, 39, and Cristina Irimie, 53. A neighbor remembered Schermerhorn as inquisitive when he was a little boy. Aspinwall and Irimie were both math teachers, and Aspinwall also helped coach the school's football team. Irimie, who immigrated from Romania, volunteered at a local church, where she taught dance.

Additional charges will be filed against Colt Gray, Smith said. When the teenager was taken into custody Wednesday, authorities did not know the identities or conditions of the nine people injured in the attack, so they weren't initially able to file charges related to those, he said.

Colt Gray denied threatening to carry out a school shooting when authorities interviewed him last year

about a menacing post on social media, according to a sheriff's report obtained Thursday. Conflicting evidence on the post's origin left investigators unable to arrest anyone, the report said. Jackson County Sheriff Janis Mangum said she reviewed the report from May 2023 and found nothing that would have justified bringing charges at the time.

The attack was the latest among dozens of school shootings across the U.S. in recent years, including especially deadly ones in Newtown, Connecticut; Parkland, Florida; and Uvalde, Texas. The classroom killings have set off fervent debates about gun control but there has been little change to national gun laws.

It was the 30th mass killing in the U.S. so far this year, according to a database maintained by The Associated Press and USA Today in partnership with Northeastern University. At least 127 people have died in those killings, which are defined as events in which four or more people die within a 24-hour period, not including the killer — the same definition used by the FBI.

The cases will be presented to a grand jury, which has its next scheduled meeting Oct. 17, Smith said. Grand jury proceedings are not open to the public or news media. If the grand jury issues indictments for Colt and Colin Gray, they will then be scheduled for arraignment. Colt Gray faces another hearing on Dec. 4.

A hitman serving life in prison gets more time for killing 'Whitey' Bulger

By JOHN RABY Associated Press

CLARKSBURG, W.Va. (AP) — A former Mafia hitman already serving life in prison was sentenced to 25 years Friday in the 2018 fatal prison bludgeoning of notorious Boston gangster James "Whitey" Bulger.

Prosecutors said Fotios "Freddy" Geas used a lock attached to a belt to repeatedly hit the 89-year-old Bulger in the head hours after he arrived at the troubled U.S. Penitentiary, Hazelton, from another lockup in Florida in October 2018. Defense attorneys disputed that characterization Friday, saying Geas hit Bulger with his fist.

The Justice Department said last year that it would not seek the death penalty against Geas in Bulger's killing.

The sentences — 15 years for voluntary manslaughter and 10 years for assault resulting in serious bodily injury — will be served consecutively with each other as well to the current life term for Geas.

U.S. District Judge Thomas Kleeh agreed to a sentencing recommendation from prosecutors that was longer than government guidelines. Kleeh said he found the final result to be "fair, reasonable and just." The judge dismissed more serious charges that included murder and conspiracy to commit first-degree murder, which each carried maximum penalties of life in prison.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Brandon Flower said the sentence recommendation was based in part on the ages of Bulger and Geas, 57.

"Mr. Geas is not really going to have an opportunity to step outside," Flower said. "That is where he's going to spend the rest of his days."

Geas declined to make a statement in court prior to sentencing.

Bulger, who ran the largely Irish gang in Boston in the 1970s and '80s, also served as an FBI informant who ratted on his gang's main rival, according to the bureau. Bulger strongly denied ever being a government informant.

Bulger became one of the nation's most wanted fugitives after fleeing Boston in 1994 thanks to a tip from his FBI handler that he was about to be indicted. He was captured at age 81 after more than 16 years on the run and convicted in 2013 in 11 killings and dozens of other gangland crimes.

Another Hazelton prisoner, Massachusetts gangster Paul J. DeCologero, was sentenced to more than four years in prison in August on an assault charge in Bulger's killing. Prosecutors said he acted as a lookout for Geas. A third inmate, Sean McKinnon, pleaded guilty in June to lying to FBI special agents. McKinnon was given no additional prison time and was returned to Florida to finish his supervised release. He had served a sentence for stealing guns from a firearms dealer.

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According to court records, prisoners found out ahead of time that Bulger would be arriving at the West Virginia facility. DeCologero and Geas spent about seven minutes in Bulger's cell during the attack.

A prisoner testified to a grand jury that DeCologero told him Bulger was a "snitch" and they planned to kill him as soon as he came into their unit.

Geas was a close associate of the Mafia and acted as an enforcer but was not an official "made" member because he is Greek, not Italian. He and his brother were sentenced to life in 2011 for their roles in several violent crimes, including the 2003 killing of Adolfo "Big Al" Bruno, a Genovese crime family boss in Springfield, Massachusetts. Another mobster ordered Bruno's killing because he was upset that Bruno had talked to the FBI, prosecutors said.

Plea deals for Geas, DeCologero and McKinnon were disclosed May 13. Geas and DeCologero were identified as suspects shortly after Bulger's death, but they remained uncharged for years as the investigation dragged on.

After the killing, experts criticized Bulger's transfer to Hazelton, where workers had already been sounding the alarm about violence and understaffing, and his placement in the general population instead of more protective housing.

A Justice Department inspector general investigation found in 2022 that the killing was the result of multiple layers of management failures, widespread incompetence and flawed policies at the federal Bureau of Prisons. The inspector general found no evidence of "malicious intent" by any bureau employees but said a series of bureaucratic blunders left Bulger at the mercy of rival gangsters.

In court Friday, defense attorney Nathan Chambers called the Bureau of Prisons' conduct "shocking" and "egregious." He said Geas disputed some witness statements that were included in a presentencing report and noted an autopsy showed the cause of death was a single blow to the left ear.

"There's no evidence that a weapon was used, let alone a padlock," Chambers said.

Flower later said the defense and prosecutors previously agreed to the facts in the case, including who went in and out of Bulger's cell, and what happened to Bulger.

Also in 2022, a federal judge dismissed a lawsuit filed by Bulger's family against the bureau and 30 unidentified prison system employees.

In July, the U.S. Senate passed legislation to overhaul oversight and bring greater transparency to the bureau following reporting from The Associated Press that exposed systemic corruption in the federal prison system and led to increased congressional scrutiny.

In Ukraine, a city grieves for a family killed in a deadly Russia missile attack

By LYUBA SOROKINA and DEREK GATOPOULOS Associated Press

LVIV, Ukraine (AP) — Thousands of mourners gathered Friday for funeral services in the western Ukrainian city of Lviv for victims of a Russian missile attack that killed seven people, including a mother and her three daughters.

The pre-dawn blasts earlier this week in the historic center of the city also injured dozens of civilians and shocked Ukrainians as the country endures a renewed round of Russian bombardment.

The city came to a virtual standstill as the mourners, many wiping away tears and some holding single sunflowers or bouquets, gathered outside a church in central Lviv where the funeral services were held in succession.

The deaths have left a profound impact on the city, which had largely been spared the worst of the attacks that typically target infrastructure and are focused with greater intensity in the east of the country.

As hundreds of mourners looked on, Yaroslav Bazylevych, who lost his wife and three daughters, attended the funeral at the Garrison Church of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul.

Dressed in black, his face still marked by blast injuries, he was supported by another man as he walked to the church and stood over the open white caskets of his wife, Yevgenia, 43, and daughters Emilia, 7,

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Daryna, 18, and Yaryna, 21, who were clothed in traditional dress with wreaths of flowers on their heads. Mourners filed past the caskets, some leaving flowers and others stopping to hug the father. Residents lined the streets of Lviv as hearses and other vehicles carried the victims to a nearby cemetery, followed by more than a dozen black-clad priests and students carrying white wooden crosses.

At a nearby roadside memorial, candles flickered next to a teddy bear and personal mementos beneath a banner with black-and-white photographs of the blast victims.

The blasts damaged scores of buildings, including several classified as national heritage sites. Survivors described receiving little warning from air raid sirens before the missiles hit.

"The scariest part was that the explosions were happening both behind and in front of our house. I didn't know what to do," local resident Tamara Ponomarenko told The Associated Press. "I thought about running to the bomb shelter, but it wasn't nearby. The school was close, should I run there instead?"

Another survivor, Yelyzaveta Harapko, added: "I went to close the window, to lower the blinds. And as I was doing that, there was an explosion. Sparks flew everywhere, and the window was gone. After that, I heard someone scream, and later I heard cries: 'Help, people are trapped under the rubble!'"

The deaths of children in the missile attack were seen by many as an attack on an emerging generation that has known nothing but war.

"In the center of Europe, Russia is exterminating whole families of Ukrainians. The Russians are killing our children, our future," Lviv Mayor Andriy Sadovyi wrote in an online post.

Marta Kuzii, an associate professor at the Ukrainian Catholic University, where 18-year-old Daryna Bazylevych was a student, shared the sentiment.

"Daryna represents the generation that has been given the mission to rebuild Ukraine. She was a child who grew up with the war; it has been part of her entire conscious life," Kuzii said.

"She was raised in a family with deep values and a clear understanding of what Ukraine stands for. It was an intelligent, highly educated, artistic, and cultured family."

How to talk with kids about school shootings and other traumatic events

By CHEYANNE MUMPHREY AP Education Writer

Mass shootings have effects on communities that are felt long after the day's tragedy. School shootings in particular can have physical, emotional and behavioral effects on kids — even if the shooting occurred on the other side of the country.

Exposure to school shootings, even if indirectly, is shown to disrupt people's sense of safety and stability, said Sonali Rajan, professor at Columbia University, who studies firearm-related harms on children.

Talking about it can help.

Parents aren't alone in this task. Many health experts, including psychologists and grief counselors, remind people there are resources to support students' mental and emotional health as they grieve and process.

Here's how they say families should address traumatic experiences with their kids.

Don't avoid the conversation

It takes time to process emotions, regardless of age, so adults should start by taking care of themselves. That said, experts encourage parents to have conversations with their children and not avoid the topic, if kids indicate a willingness to talk about it.

"If they are not hearing about it from you as their parent, they will hear about it from their friends at school," says Emilie Ney, director of professional development at the National Association of School Psychologists.

It's OK for caregivers to say they don't have all the answers and not force the conversation, according to guidance from the National Child Traumatic Stress Network. Being available and patient is key.

This isn't just a job for parents and guardians. All adults should remember to be available for the kids in their life. After all, not all children have trusted adults they can speak with, said Crystal Garrant, chief pro-

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gram officer at Sandy Hook Promise, a nonprofit group that works to prevent suicides and mass shootings.

For instance, she said, adults who work in before-school or after-school programs should ask the kids in their care open-ended questions, do community-building activities or provide kids with other opportunities to share openly. They may not have the opportunity to do so otherwise.

Tailor the talk to the child's age

How much children are able to understand a situation will depend on their age and development, Ney said.

"There is no specific age target for these conversations," said Garrant, who has a 9-year-old daughter. "But make sure that younger children understand the word that you're using. When we say safety, what does it mean to feel safe? How does it feel in your body? What does it sound like when you're not safe?"

Some children may have emotional and behavioral responses to traumatic events, such as anxiety, nightmares or difficulty concentrating.

Younger children need simple information and reassurances their schools and homes are safe, guidance from the National Association of School Psychologists notes. Older children have a deeper capacity for understanding and could benefit from hearing about what agency they might have to keep themselves safe.

Validate big feelings about school shootings

Recognizing, acknowledging and validating children's emotions are key, said Beverly Warnock, executive director of the National Organization of Parents of Murdered Children based in Cincinnati.

"You need to get those feelings out and be honest," she said. "Don't try to squash the feelings or not talk about it. It's something that will be with you for the rest of your life."

The process of navigating emotions after a shooting can be confusing and frustrating for people, Ney said.

"The stages of grief are not necessarily sequential. People may go in and out of the various different phases, and it may be that it doesn't really hit someone until a week later," Ney said.

Psychologists hope to reassure people their feelings are normal and they don't have to pretend they are unaffected.

"Even if you didn't know anyone involved, even if they were very far away from you, it is okay to grieve," Ney said. "It shows that you care about others."

After acknowledging the emotional response, Warnock said, there is comfort in knowing life goes on.

"You will find a coping skill, and you will be able to enjoy life again," she said. "You may not feel that way now, but it does happen. It's just going to take some time."

If you need more help

If you or someone you know are experiencing distress because of a mass shooting, you can call the 24/7 National Disaster Distress Helpline. The number is 1-800-985-5990, and Spanish speakers can press "2" for bilingual support. To connect directly to a crisis counselor in American Sign Language, call 1-800-985-5990 from your videophone.

Pope arrives in Papua New Guinea for the second leg of his Southeast Asia and Oceania trip

By NICOLE WINFIELD and EDNA TARIGAN Associated Press

PORT MORESBY, Papua New Guinea (AP) — Pope Francis arrived in Papua New Guinea on Friday for the second leg of his four-nation trip through Southeast Asia and Oceania, becoming the second pope to visit the poor, strategically important South Pacific nation.

A cannon salute and marching band greeted the 87-year-old pope on the tarmac of the Port Moresby airport as he arrived after a six-hour flight from Jakarta, Indonesia. During the brief welcome ceremony, the pope momentarily lost his balance while maneuvering from his wheelchair to a chair, but his security guards steadied him.

While he was travelling, Indonesian police revealed they had detained seven people from the Java and Sumatra regions on suspicion of making threats on social media of staging suicide bombings during papal events and disrupting the pope's security protocol.

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The spokesperson for the Indonesian police's elite counterterrorism squad, Aswin Siregar, described the threats as primarily a publicity-seeking exercise, but added that the investigation was continuing.

Francis' packed three-day Indonesia visit culminated with a jubilant Mass on Thursday afternoon before a crowd of 100,000 that filled two sports stadiums and overflowed into a parking lot.

"Don't tire of dreaming and of building a civilization of peace," Francis urged them in an ad-libbed homily. "Be builders of hope. Be builders of peace."

The Vatican had originally expected the Mass would draw some 60,000 people, and Indonesian authorities had predicted 80,000. But the Vatican spokesman quoted local organizers as saying more than 100,000 attended.

"I feel very lucky compared to other people who can't come here or even had the intention to come here," said Vienna Frances Florensius Basol, who came with her husband and a group of 40 people from Sabah, Malaysia, but couldn't get into the stadium.

"Even though we are outside with other Indonesians, seeing the screen, I think I am lucky enough," she said from a parking lot where a giant TV screen was erected for anyone who didn't have tickets for the service.

While in Indonesia, Francis sought to encourage the country's 8.9 million Catholics, who make up just 3% of the population of 275 million, while also seeking to boost interfaith ties with the country boasting the world's largest Muslim population.

In the highlight of the visit, Francis and the grand imam of Jakarta's Istiqlal Mosque, Southeast Asia's largest, signed a joint declaration pledging to work to end religiously inspired violence and protect the environment.

In Papua New Guinea, Francis' agenda is aligned with more of his social justice priorities. He will lay them out during his first full day Saturday, when he meets with the governor general before addressing government authorities and diplomats. Francis will also meet with children cared for by two charity services and then address the country's bishops, priests and religious sisters at a Marian sanctuary.

The strategically important Commonwealth nation is home to more than 10 million people, most of whom are subsistence farmers.

John Lavu, the choir conductor at St. Charles Luwanga parish in the capital, Port Moresby, said the visit would help him grow stronger in his Catholic faith.

"I have lived this faith all my life, but the coming of the Holy Father, the head of the church, to Papua New Guinea and to be a witness of his coming to us is going to be very important for me in my life as a Catholic," he said on the eve of Francis' arrival.

Francis will be traveling to remote Vanimo to check in on some Catholic missionaries from his native Argentina who are trying to spread the Catholic faith to a largely tribal people who also practice pagan and Indigenous traditions.

The country, the South Pacific's most populous after Australia, has more than 800 Indigenous languages and has been riven by tribal conflicts over land for centuries, with conflicts becoming more and more lethal in recent decades.

History's first Latin American pope will likely refer to the need to find harmony among tribal groups while visiting, the Vatican said. Another possible theme is the country's fragile ecosystem, its rich natural resources at risk of exploitation and the threat posed by climate change.

The Papua New Guinean government has blamed extraordinary rainfall for a massive landslide in May that buried a village in Enga province. The government said more than 2,000 people were killed, while the United Nations estimated the death toll at 670.

Francis becomes only the second pope to visit Papua New Guinea, after St. John Paul II touched down in 1984 and again in 1995 during his lengthy, globetrotting voyages. Then, John Paul paid tribute to the Catholic missionaries who had already been trying for a century to bring the faith to the country.

Papua New Guinea, administered by nearby Australia until independence in 1975, is the second leg of Francis' 11-day trip. In the longest and farthest voyage of his papacy, Francis will also visit East Timor and Singapore before returning to the Vatican on Sept. 13.

Inside the Georgia high school where a sleepy morning was pierced by gunfire

BY JEFF AMY Associated Press

WINDER, Ga. (AP) — It was the middle of second period at Apalachee High School, and the boy who few knew slipped out of his algebra class in J Hall again. That didn't strike his fellow students as unusual. "He got up sometime in the morning, and class continued as normal," Lyela Sayarath said. "He was probably just skipping."

Many teenagers weren't quite awake on Wednesday morning at the high school near Winder, in rapidly suburbanizing Barrow County. Junior Julie Sandoval was dozing in her physics class as other students caught up on work. Sophomore Jacob King also dozed off, in world history, after a morning football practice.

But soon, terror and panic erupted as authorities say Colt Gray, the 14-year-old student who left class, returned to the hallway with a semiautomatic assault-style rifle and opened fire. Four people were killed and nine more hurt, seven of them shot, in the latest school shooting to shock the nation.

Gray is charged with four counts of murder. Authorities haven't said yet where he got the weapon, how he brought it to campus or what he did with it in the two hours between school starting at 8:15 a.m. and when shots first rang out around 10:20 a.m.

Law enforcement hasn't said whether Gray was being sought before the shooting. "We're still trying to clarify a lot of the timeline," Georgia Bureau of Investigation Director Chris Hosey said Wednesday.

On Thursday, officials also arrested his father, Colin Gray, and charged him with involuntary manslaughter, second-degree murder and cruelty to children, saying he knowingly allowed his son to possess a gun.

At first, students thought it was a drill

At the school on Wednesday morning, the alert was sounded when several teachers set off their wearable panic buttons, which Sheriff Jud Smith said were distributed to staff only days earlier. That sparked a lockdown, and immediately a warning flashed on classroom smartboards across the sprawling school.

"The screen ... said 'hard lockdown' in big red words, and the top light started flashing," said Layla Ferrell, a junior who was in a food and nutrition class in another hall.

Many thought it was a drill. Georgia schools are required to complete at least one active shooter drill by Oct. 1 each year.

"I thought it was fake until my friend told me it wasn't fake," King said. He added, "They weren't really acting like it was real."

Some heard what sounded like a loud, metallic crash.

"It sounded more like punching a locker at first," Ferrell said.

But those in J Hall had no doubt.

Students fled or hid under desks

Sayarath said that when the suspect tried to return to class, a student saw what warrants describe as "black semi-automatic AR-15 style rifle" and refused to let him in. Classroom doors at the school lock automatically and must be opened from inside, a "hardening" precaution in America's era of school shootings.

Kaylee Abner, a sophomore, said a student who left her geometry class to take a test elsewhere came racing back.

"She ran back inside, shuts the door and then we hear three gunshots," Abner said.

Junior Landon Culver got a glimpse of the shooter after leaving algebra II.

"I was walking out to get water and I heard gunshots and I heard bullets going like by my head," Culver said. "It looked like he was wearing a black hoodie and he had a AR and, I just, I didn't really stick around too long to look."

Marques Coleman Jr. told The Washington Post that the shooter leaned inside an open door of his algebra classroom and sprayed it with gunfire, hitting people including Christian Angulo, who died. Others were shot in the hall.

Senior Kassidy Reed was retaking a test in a hallway when she heard shots from around the corner. A teacher told everyone to flee.

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"He got us up and told us to run because our classroom door was shut and it was locked, so we couldn't get in there," Reed said.

A teacher across the hall opened the door to her chemistry classroom, and the students ran inside. "I hid under a lab table," Reed said.

Teachers turned out lights and herded students into corners or behind desks. Classroom furniture became makeshift barricades.

"We put desks and chairs against our door and built it up so that nobody could get in, and then we were all just quiet, waiting," Ferrell said.

They sent chilling messages to family members

Authorities say the suspect fatally shot students Angulo and Mason Schermerhorn, both 14, and teachers Richard Aspinwall, 39, and Cristina Irimie, 53. The nine who were hurt — eight students and a teacher — are expected to recover.

One of the three school resource officers on campus quickly tracked down the shooter, who gave up and was taken into custody, the sheriff said.

Some students said they heard shouts from an officer ordering the shooter to halt and put his gun down.

"I heard the 'Get down! Get down! Don't move!' Reed said. Then, the sound of a "scuffle" as the suspect was handcuffed.

But the terror wasn't over.

Students said some students and teachers took off their clothes to try to stanch bleeding from gunshot wounds.

Deputies with guns drawn searched classroom by classroom for any more wounded, as well as any other possible shooters.

As students huddled, they called and texted each other and their parents. More than a few sent what they feared would be farewells.

"I love you. I love you so much. Ma I love you," a crying Sandoval texted. "I'm sorry I'm not the best daughter. I love you."

Sandoval's mother wrote back in Spanish to say everything would be all right and she should trust in God.

"We started praying, because we didn't know whether we would come out alive or not," said Michelle Moncada, a freshman who was in art class.

Nearby, Sandoval said, another student was on the phone with their mother: "They're shooting up the school! They're shooting up the school!"

Abner held the hand of a boy who was praying.

"I was just trying to think happy thoughts, trying not to think anything negative," she said.

Parents abandoned cars and ran to the school

The hundreds of panicked parents who raced to the school created a traffic jam along the two-lane roads near Apalachee High. Many abandoned their cars and ran toward campus.

Shannon Callahan, Ferrell's mother, said her daughter texted a photo of her barricaded under a table. "Once the texts stopped, I was 100% completely worried."

During the evacuation, King saw the body of what appeared to a student on the floor. "They were blocking the body," King said.

Abner also saw what appeared to be female student who had been shot, in the shoulder. She was leaning against a wall as emergency personnel attended to her.

Another female student was lying on the floor and covering her eyes, Abner said: "I don't know if she was dead or shot or something, or just processing."

Reed saw a gun on the floor, and blood.

As they fled, students abandoned bookbags, phones, even shoes. Ferrell lost her rainbow Crocs and later made the long walk to her mother's car in her socks.

Gathered inside the football stadium, students wept and milled around.

"Everyone is crying, everyone is walking around," Moncada said. "They're all running around trying to see who's OK and who's not."

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By early afternoon, students began to be released to parents to go home. But Culver and others said the sound of gunfire will stick with them forever. "You could hear gunshots, like just ringing out through the school," Culver said. "And you're just wondering, which one of those is going to be somebody that you're best friends with or somebody that you love?"

Today in History: September 7, Germany launches Blitz on UK

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Saturday, Sept. 7, the 251st day of 2024. There are 115 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Sept. 7, 1940, Nazi Germany began an intense bombing campaign of Britain during World War II with an air attack on London; known as The Blitz, the eight-month campaign resulted in more than 40,000 civilian deaths.

Also on this date:

In 1921, the first Miss America Pageant was held in Atlantic City, N.J.

In 1943, a fire at the Gulf Hotel, a rooming house in Houston, claimed 55 lives.

In 1963, the Pro Football Hall of Fame opened in Canton, Ohio and enshrined its first 17 members.

In 1977, the Panama Canal Treaty, which called for the U.S. to turn over control of the waterway to Panama at the end of 1999, was signed in Washington by U.S. President Jimmy Carter and Panamanian leader Omar Torrijos.

In 1986, Bishop Desmond Tutu was installed as the first Black clergyman to lead the Anglican Church in southern Africa.

In 1996, rapper Tupac Shakur was shot and mortally wounded on the Las Vegas Strip; he died six days later.

In 2005, police and soldiers went house to house in New Orleans to try to coax remaining residents into leaving the city shattered by Hurricane Katrina.

In 2021, El Salvador became the first country in the world to make Bitcoin legal tender.

Today's Birthdays: Jazz musician Sonny Rollins is 94. Singer Gloria Gaynor is 81. Actor Julie Kavner is 74. Rock singer Chrissie Hynde (The Pretenders) is 73. Actor Corbin Bernsen is 70. Actor Michael Emerson is 70. Pianist-singer Michael Feinstein is 68. Singer/songwriter Diane Warren is 68. Actor J. Smith-Cameron is 67. Actor Toby Jones is 58. Actor-comedian Leslie Jones (TV: "Saturday Night Live") is 57. Actor Tom Everett Scott is 54. Actor Shannon Elizabeth is 51. Actor Oliver Hudson is 48. Actor Evan Rachel Wood is 37. Olympic gold medal swimmer Ariarne Titmus is 24. Actor Ian Chen (TV: "Fresh Off the Boat") is 18.