

Groton Daily Independent

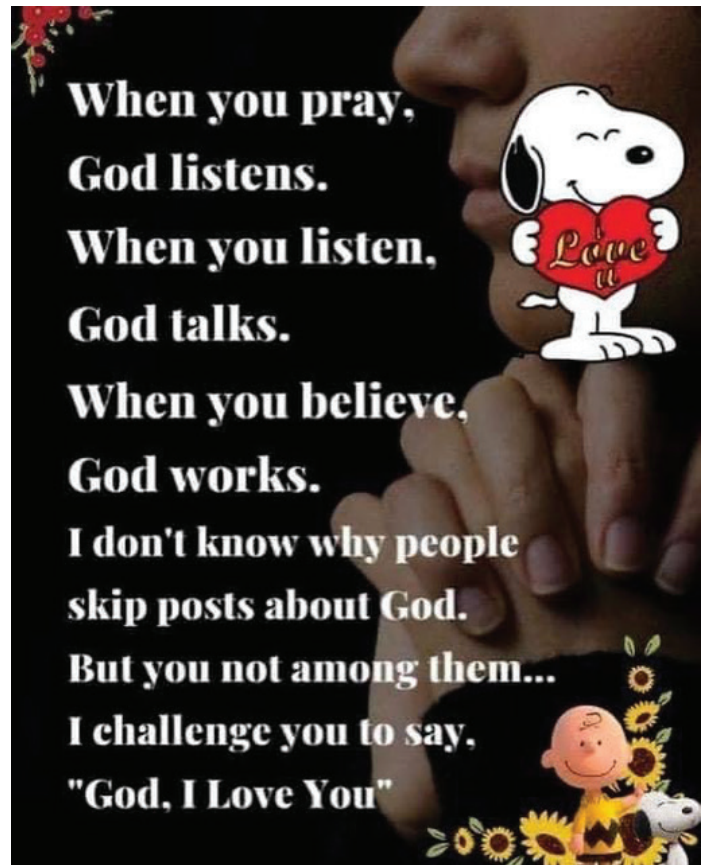
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Tuesday, Sept. 10

School Breakfast: Scones.
School Lunch: Taco, refried beans.
Senior Menu: Tator tot hot dish, carrots, peaches, whole wheat bread.
Cross Country at Britton-Hecla, 4 p.m.
Boys Soccer hosts James Valley Christian, 4 p.m.
Volleyball hosts Webster Area: 7th/C at 5 p.m., 8th/JV at 6 p.m. with varsity to follow.
Emmanuel Lutheran: Church council, 6 p.m.
Common Cents Community Thrift Store open, 209 N Main, 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.
Pantry open, Community Center, 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.
United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.; Caring Team Meeting, 1 p.m.

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



Wednesday, Sept. 11

PATRIOT DAY
School Breakfast: Oatmeal.
School Lunch: General's TSO Chicken, rice.
Senior Menu: Ham, au gratin potatoes, creamed cabbage, tropical fruit, whole wheat bread.
Emmanuel Lutheran: Confirmation, TBD; League, 6:30 p.m.
Groton C&MA: Kids' Club, Youth Group, Adult Bible Study at 7 pm.
St. John's Lutheran: Confirmation, 3:45 p.m.
United Methodist: Community coffee hour, 9:30 a.m.
3rd/4th and 5th/6th Football hosts Sisseton - 6PM

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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.

Tyre Nichols Trial

The federal criminal trial over the death of Tyre Nichols began yesterday in Memphis, Tennessee. Three former police officers face charges of violating Nichols' civil rights through excessive use of force; two others have pleaded guilty.

The incident dates back to Jan. 7, 2023, when five Black police officers pulled over 29-year-old Nichols, also a Black man, on suspicion of reckless driving. Video footage shows the officers pulling Nichols out of the car, after which Nichols fled the scene and was ultimately apprehended again. The officers punched, kicked, and beat Nichols with a baton until he collapsed. Nichols was taken to a hospital roughly 30 minutes later and died from his injuries. If convicted, the officers face the possibility of life in prison or the death penalty.

Nichols' death sparked protests and debate around police tactics and reform. Following the release of video footage, the 40-member unit the officers were part of—a task force to patrol high-crime areas—was disbanded.

James Earl Jones Dies

James Earl Jones, the iconic actor known for voicing Darth Vader in the "Star Wars" franchise and Mufasa in 1994's "The Lion King," died yesterday at his home in Pawling, New York. The cause of his death was not disclosed. He was 93.

Jones' career spanned over 70 years on the screen and stage, earning him Emmy, Grammy, Oscar, and Tony awards (though his Oscar was honorary). Known as an EGOT, only 26 other entertainers have achieved the feat. Born in Mississippi in 1931, Jones was raised by his grandparents and overcame a childhood stutter. After graduating from college and serving two years in the Korean War, he made his Broadway debut in 1958 and movie debut in 1964's "Dr. Strangelove."

Jones starred in over 80 films, including as King Jaffe Joffer in the 1988 comedy "Coming to America" and its 2021 sequel and as author Terence Mann in the 1989 sports fantasy "Field of Dreams."

Apple's Glow Party

Apple revealed its new product lineup at the company's "It's Glowtime" event yesterday, showcasing its new iPhone 16 series. The new models integrate its previously announced Apple Intelligence AI software and a new A18 chip up to 30% faster than the iPhone 15 model.

Other highlights from the event include the introduction of a new Capture button across all new iPhone models for quick photo and video capture. The Apple Watch 10 is reportedly 10% thinner than previous models with improved battery life. Apple also announced two new AirPods models, including a premium version with active noise cancellation and a hearing-aid feature pending Food and Drug Administration approval.

The news comes as Apple's Chinese rival, Huawei, is set to unveil today its tri-fold smartphone, the Mate XT, following a preorder campaign that saw over 3 million sales. Apple's market share in China has been declining in recent quarters, and it is no longer a top-five smartphone vendor in the country as of July.

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Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Catherine, Princess of Wales, announces she has completed her chemotherapy to treat an unspecified form of cancer.

Fashion mogul Peter Nygard sentenced to 11 years in prison in Canada after being found guilty in November to four charges of sexual assault.

Harvey Weinstein to undergo emergency heart surgery.

FX's "Shogun" hauls in a record 14 wins at the 2024 Creative Arts Emmys with FX leading all distributors with 27 awards; Primetime Emmys are set for this Sunday (8 pm ET, ABC).

Science & Technology

Astronomers discover a pair of supermassive black holes with the closest separation between the two—roughly 300 light-years—observed to date.

Scientists capture footage of young Japanese eels escaping after being eaten by a predatory fish via the animal's digestive tract and gills; marks the first known observation of the behavior in nature.

Follow-up study on the first partial face transplant to include an eye shows no signs of rejection by the patient; vision has not been restored in donor eye, but has achieved blood flow.

Business & Markets

US stock markets close higher (S&P 500 +1.2%, Dow +1.2%, Nasdaq +1.2%).

Terns Pharmaceuticals shares jump as much as 26% on weight-loss drug trial results.

Palantir shares close up 14% on news it will join the S&P 500 Sept. 23, along with Dell Technologies and Erie Indemnity.

Google begins federal antitrust trial related to its ad-tech business; trial comes after a federal judge in a separate case last month said the tech giant violated laws by illegally holding a monopoly on online search and text advertising.

Discount retailer Big Lots initiates Chapter 11 bankruptcy proceedings, will sell its business to private equity firm Nexus Capital.

Politics & World Affairs

Vice President Kamala Harris, former President Donald Trump to face off in their first presidential debate tonight in Philadelphia, hosted by ABC at 9 pm ET.

Death toll from Typhoon Yagi rises to at least 49 people in northern Vietnam, with at least 22 people missing, hundreds injured, and millions without power; Yagi is the most powerful storm to hit Asia this year.

Tropical Storm Francine forms in Gulf of Mexico, forecast to strike parts of Louisiana tomorrow as a hurricane.

Germany tightens land borders temporarily to curb what it considers to be irregular migration and to protect the country from extremist threats.

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Week 3 Football Coaches Poll

11AAA

Harrisburg- 113 pts (16 1st place votes)
Sioux Falls Lincoln- 91 pts
Brandon Valley- 80 pts
Sioux Falls Jefferson- 59 pts
Bishop O'Gorman- 27 pts
Receiving votes: Sioux Falls Roosevelt, Sioux Falls
Washington

11AA

Pierre- 132 pts (25 1st place votes)
Spearfish- 67 pts
Watertown- 63 pts
Brookings- 48 pts
Yankton- 42 pts
Receiving votes: Tea, Aberdeen Central

11A

Canton- 106 pts (12 1st place votes)
Sioux Falls Christian- 91 pts
Lennox- 64 pts
Dakota Valley- 38 pts
Dell Rapids- 30 pts
Receiving votes: Tri-Valley, West Central

11B

Winner- 107 pts (19 1st place votes)
Elk Point-Jefferson- 77 pts
Sioux Valley- 66 pts
Woonsocket/Wessington Springs/Sanborn Cen-
tral- 32 pts
Mt. Vernon/Plankinton- 12 pts
Receiving votes: Clark/Willow Lake, Groton Area

9AA

Parkston- 136 pts (19 1st place votes)
Hamlin- 118 pts
Elkton/Lake Benton- 99 pts
Hill City- 32 pts
Tripp-Delmont/Armour/Andes Central/Dakota
Christian- 21 pts
Receiving votes: Viborg/Hurley, Hanson

9A

Howard- 128 pts (20 1st place votes)
Wall- 101 pts
Warner- 87 pts
Wolsey-Wessington- 53 pts
Alcester-Hudson- 20 pts
Receiving votes: Harding County/Bison, Philip

9B

Avon- 125 pts (24 1st place votes)
Faulkton- 84 pts
Dell Rapids St. Mary- 73 pts
Canistota- 41 pts
Corsica-Stickney- 33 pts
Receiving votes: Sully Buttes, Kadoka Area, Her-
reid/Selby Area

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Groton Chamber of Commerce

September 4, 2024

12pm City Hall

- Members present: Katelyn Nehlich, Ashley Bentz, April Abeln, Becca Johnson
 - Minutes from the previous meeting were approved on a motion by Abeln and seconded by Nehlich. All members present voted aye.
 - Treasurer's report was given. Dacotah Bank checking account balance is \$12,042.90 in addition to the \$10,000 CD. The bucks account balance is \$2,289. President Bentz has been added to the accounts and past President Carol Kutter has been removed. The report was approved by Abeln and seconded by Nehlich. All members present voted aye.
 - A program from the Jr. Legion State Tourney was passed around showcasing our ad inside the front cover. A \$300 invoice was received from the Groton Baseball/Softball Foundation for the ad plus \$100 for foul ball sponsorship.
 - The winner of the Family Fun Fest giveaway basket was Tasha Barrera.
 - New welcome banners have been received and paid for. City employees will assist with setup and installation.
 - Motion by Abeln and seconded by Nehlich to order 50 white 20oz tumblers with handles from Rustic Cuts at \$32 each. All members present voted aye. Abeln will see about a 15% discount. Tumblers will be for sale at City Hall for \$36 each.
 - An email motion was made by Nehlich and seconded by Douglas Heinrich with amendment by Bruce Babcock to extend the shirt deadline to November 22nd. Motion also included a boosted post on Facebook for \$50 for 1 week. All members present voted aye. Abeln will ask for an updated order quantity.
 - Motion by Abeln and seconded by Nehlich to have a business storefront decorating contest during Homecoming week. Pictures of businesses will be posted on Facebook with the winner chosen by number of likes. The winner will receive \$50 in bucks. All members present voted aye.
 - Advertising in the GDI was discussed. Motion by Abeln and seconded by Nehlich place an ad in the SD and Aberdeen Magazines in the July/August, September/October, and November/December issues for 2025. All members present voted aye.
 - Becca spoke about Snow Queen and the expense to send contestants to State and their fundraising efforts. She thanked the Chamber for their help in advertising and encouraged groups to reach out to contestants to volunteer for community exposure. Becca left the meeting.
 - Motion by Abeln and seconded by Nehlich to donate \$325 to Snow Queen as well as \$100 in Chamber Bucks for their Frosty contest (total State entry is \$650). All members present voted aye.
 - Motion by Abeln and seconded by Nehlich to donate \$100 to the Carnival of Silver Skates. All members present voted aye. Check will be ready for pickup at Dacotah Bank.
 - Bentz will speak with owner Sam Bahr about a welcome for A Touch Up. New business welcomes with also be set up with The Jungle and possibly the new owner of Kate's Confections.
 - It was mentioned that a post should be done to encourage membership and that dues notices be printed to mail next meeting.
 - Next Meeting: October 2nd at City Hall at 12:00pm
- Upcoming events
- 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
 - 11/08-10/2024 Front Porch 605 Christmas at the Barn 10am-5pm
 - 11/16/2024 Legion Post #39 Turkey Party 6:30pm
 - 11/28/2024 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm
 - 12/07/2024 Olive Grove 8th Annual Holiday Party 6pm-close

Weekly Vikings Roundup

By Jordan Wright

Despite fumbling the ball on their first drive of the game, the Minnesota Vikings couldn't have asked for a better start to their 2024 NFL season. In the past, the Vikings rarely dominated against inferior opponents, but on Sunday they went into East Rutherford, NJ and beat the Giants 28-6. This was the first time the Vikings won a game by 17 or more points since week 15, 2019 (for comparison, every other team in the league has at least three wins of 17+ in that time frame).

Sam Darnold had an efficient game, completing 19 of 24 passes for 208 yards, two touchdowns and one interception. And even though there was constant pressure up the middle from Giants' defensive tackle Dexter Lawrence, he was only sacked once. Darnold did exactly what was asked of him, getting the ball out quickly and into the hands of the Vikings' playmakers, plus a few deep shots thrown in there to keep the defense honest.

Aaron Jones proved today he still has plenty left in the tank. He ran for 96 yards on only 14 carries (6.7ypc) and found the endzone in the first quarter. He ran with purpose, lowering his shoulder and fighting for extra yards every run. Jones also caught both passes thrown his way for an additional 15 yards. The Vikings once again have a respectable ground game, which will make life easier for everyone – if teams load the box to stop the run, the Vikings have Justin Jefferson and Jordan Addison who can make defenses pay.

Justin Jefferson had four catches for 59 yards and a touchdown, Jordan Addison had three for 35 yards, and Nailor only had one catch but it was a 21-yard score. With the Vikings up by three scores in the second half, the Vikings didn't need to pass much. However, there is undoubtedly a connection forming between Darnold and Jefferson which should only improve week after week.

The Vikings' offense was efficient, but the defense was suffocating, limiting the Giants to only 136 yards through three quarters. Four players – Pat Jones (2), Harrison Phillips (1), Andrew Van Ginkel (1), and Dallas Turner (1) – combined for five sacks. Harrison Smith added another interception to his Hall of Fame resume (he has 35 now for his career), and newcomer Andrew Van Ginkel had the play of the game when he intercepted Daniel Jones and returned it for a touchdown.

The player of the game on offense was Aaron Jones. His aggressive play style was infectious, and he brings a physicality to the offense that has been missing in recent years. I'm excited to watch him this season, let's just hope he can stay healthy.

The player of the game on defense was Andrew Van Ginkel. He was all over the field Sunday, accumulating four tackles, a sack, and a pick-six that put the game out of reach. Losing Danielle Hunter in the offseason was a blow to the defense, but now the team has three capable pass rushers who can fill that void.

Looking ahead, the Vikings have their home opener against the San Francisco 49ers this Sunday at noon. The Giants were a good warm-up, but the 49ers are one of the best teams in the league, so this will be a true test for the Vikings. The key to the game will be Brian Flores' defensive game plan against an offense that features Christian McCaffrey, Deebo Samuel, Brandon Aiyuk, and George Kittle.

That's Life by Tony Bender: Like an Angel

They seemed to know. The swallows began an arial ballet outside my living room window the moment I opened my laptop to mourn. Ten of them, maybe 15 acrobats engaged in a celebration, perhaps. Maybe a tribute.

It transported me back to my grandmother's last day. I was wheeling her along in the sunshine outside of the hospital when a brave sparrow alighted, hopping cheerfully behind us. They're said to be heavenly messengers. Or escorts. In morning, Grandma Spilloway was gone.

Patty was a middle child, "The Quiet Beatle," of the Bender sextet. There were cliques among us kids, matters of age and gender. Sherry and Patty and Scott and Joel. Mike and I were bookends, a decade apart. I'm the oldest. Those natural separations, combined with Patty's quiet demeanor, left us less connected than our other siblings.

That changed four years ago, when we were both diagnosed with cancer about the same time. Patty with bladder cancer, me, esophageal cancer. We always found a way to hover conspiratorially together every holiday to encourage each other and laugh in our own secret club, thumbing our noses at death. In our texts, we talked about being in the same canoe, paddling like hell. The Defiant Ones.

It's curious that it's only after they're gone that we begin to assess, to piece together the puzzle that our beloved ones were. There were clues along the way that Patricia Jan Roeszler was more than the wallflower she appeared to be.

I've been thinking about that since she graduated to the next dimension, replaying memories of her that appear like flickering film. She was deceptively resolute from the beginning, yet floating serenely in my memory of her in a softball uniform. In my mind, I see her chin thrust forward.

Our's was a law and order supper table. The usual edicts. If you put it on your plate, you ate it. "One of these days you're going to have to eat gopher tails," Dad grouched at even a sniff of a cuisine-inspired protest. But when we had chili, there was always a neat pile of kidney beans subversively stashed beside Patty's bowl. Dad pretended not to notice. She was never challenged. We instinctively recognized her power.

We teased her for years about the volume of her cries as a baby. Her mouth would open, eclipse the rest of her face like a cartoon, and the legend was

that when she did, firetrucks would pull up. From as far away as Hecla, even. There's something about genetics. When my daughter India was born 23 years ago, she wailed 45 minutes straight. "Can we put her back?" I asked.

Patty never really got to be a kid. She was a teen bride and a teen mother. I was convinced a wedding at 16 was a bad idea; it felt forced—I was wrong about that—and it led to one of my greatest regrets. I didn't go to the wedding.

Patty and Dennis were married nearly 46 years. The rest of us? Uh, five divorces, among us. To quote a long-forgot ancestor, "You don't always know as much as you think you do."

Mom and I went to see her the day before everyone got back. Dennis and a home hospice nurse were talking in the sun, eyes glistening, leaves gleaming. Flying things swooped through Curacao syrup and marshmallows above. All the things we miss when we're smelling the roses.

She hadn't been responsive for a while. Her room was too dim. I edged the curtain back a couple of inches. Darkness, your time will come. But not yet. Not today.

Mom sat on one side of the bed. I sat on the other, both of us softly stroking her arms, rubbing her shoulders. Weeping.

Occasionally, Patty groaned, trying to fight her way through the fog of dimensions and morphine. Suddenly, with a determined Herculean effort, she sat up abruptly, eyes open wider than possible, searching mine. "What's the matter!" she asked urgently. My eyes were locked with Patty's but I could feel Mom watching. There was an urgency to her question, but I wanted to make sure I answered correctly. I paused for forever. "Nothing, Patty," I said finally, so we could all breathe again. "Everything is exactly the way it's supposed to be."

We let the hospice nurses have their time. The holy ones. The lead nurse told us it could be that night. Maybe a couple days, but not much more. Her son, Chris, and his family would be there the next day, and her soul sister, Sherry. Scott and Mike.

I looked in one last time before we left. The tunnel of light from the window cast a glow on her swept-back hair, and even though cancer had ravaged her body, melted away the pounds, the light revealed reality. She was breathtakingly beautiful.

She looked like an angel.

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TAKE A TOUR OF OUR NEW 2024 RENOVATIONS, MEET FACILITY LEADERSHIP - AND TAKE DINNER TO-GO!

Wednesday
September 11, 2024
4 - 7 p.m.

AVANTARA GROTON

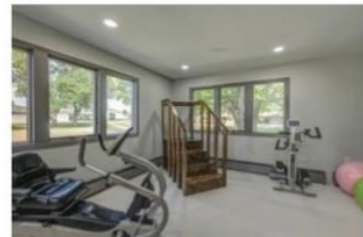
1106 N. 2nd Street, Groton, SD 57445

Pulled pork sandwich, chips & cookie provided to-go



RSVP

by September 9th by scanning here, or calling Brenda at 605.397.2365



Avantara Growth long-term care and rehabilitation



AVANTARA
GROTON

"Backpacks and Back to School"

School is back in session so it is time for a little pop quiz. What is an item that almost every student carries? If you said backpack you are off to a great start. Do you know what it takes to be at the head of the class? Let's find out if you are a star student or need to brush up a little on your backpack knowledge.

Most students carry a backpack filled with their books at some point during their school day. Did you know a heavy back pack can cause neck, shoulder, or back pain. Those narrow straps can also compress on nerves in the shoulder leading to arm numbness, tingling, or weakness. Overweight backpacks can also change the center of balance making it easier to trip.

Here is the first quiz question. A student's backpack should not weigh more than what percentage of the student's weight? A) 50%, B) 25%, or C) 15%? Answer: (C) The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that a backpack weigh no more than 15% of a child's weight. For example, a 60 pound child's backpack should weigh no more than 9 pounds.

Next question: What is the best way to wear a back pack? A) with one strap slung over one shoulder, B) with both straps used and using any additional chest or waist straps to help distribute the weight, C) dragging on the ground behind? The answer is, of course (B). Injuries are reduced when the backpack's load is distributed across the body. Padded wide shoulder straps help distribute the weight evenly across the shoulders. Chest or waist clips can help take some of that load off the shoulders. There are some backpacks now that have wheels like suitcases. In that case, (C) rolling, not dragging, your backpack behind you may be a better option, but dragging a regular backpack is not a great idea if you want your backpack to last.

Here is the last quiz question. Where should you put the heaviest items in your backpack? A) at the very top of the backpack, B) on one side of the backpack, or C) at the bottom and center of the backpack? The answer is (C) at the bottom and center of the backpack. The load should be closer to the wearer's center of gravity at the small of the back. This helps decrease risk for tripping or falling from the wearer being off balance.

How did you do? Before your student heads off to school, or you head off for a weekend hike, it is important for everyone to consider these wear and safety tips. Hopefully you do not find a forgotten sandwich from last year still stuck in the bottom. With this knowledge your students can be standing tall and proud at the head of the class. Have a great school year by staying safe and healthy out there.

Jill Kruse, D.O. is part of The Prairie Doc® team of physicians and currently practices as a hospitalist in Brookings, South Dakota. Follow The Prairie Doc® at www.prairiedoc.org and on Facebook, Instagram, and Threads featuring On Call with the Prairie Doc®, a medical Q&A show, 2 podcasts, and a Radio program, providing health information based on science, built on trust, on SDPB and streaming live on Facebook most Thursdays at 7 p.m. central and wherever podcast can be found.



Jill Kruse, DO



How one SD city relies on resident input to drive change

Bart Pfankuch

South Dakota News Watch

WATERTOWN, S.D. – Any visitor to this northeastern South Dakota city will be immediately taken by its beauty and small-town charms.

The stately Redlin Art Center welcomes those entering from the east, the scenic shores of Lake Kampeska and Pelican Lake await those arriving from the north or the west, and a vibrant downtown mixed with new and historic buildings forms the anchor of it all.

The growing city of about 23,000 also has a strong education sector led by Lake Area Technical College and a Mount Marty University satellite campus, as well as a thriving industrial and agricultural employment base driven by Terex Services and Dakota Bodies truck part manufacturers and the Glacial Lakes Energy ethanol plant.

But like any mid-sized municipality, challenges exist beneath the peaceful veneer and the generally friendly attitude of locals.

Watertown faces some of the same systemic issues that hamper growth in most South Dakota cities in the early 2020s: a lack of affordable housing, a shortage of day care slots for children of working parents and not enough people to fill open jobs.

While not readily apparent, for example, Watertown has a significant number of people who lack stable housing. In 2023, a new nonprofit group opened an emergency housing facility called 612 Flats, which included eight apartments. A year later, there is a waiting list of 40 individuals or families waiting to get housing in the building.

"People don't think we have homeless people here because they don't see them sitting on the street. But they are living in cars, they are couch hopping, or they are one argument or crisis away from being homeless," said Sara Foust, Codington County Community Services director. "We have people that come in our office weekly, if not daily, seeking help. So they're here, but you just don't see them."

The city recently faced a possible tipping point in its ongoing day care crisis, as a large child care center, Little Blessings Daycare, hit a snag in its attempt to relocate. Recently, the city and council came up with funding to aid in the planned relocation, and the day care is no longer under threat of closure. However, the potential of losing that facility and its 150 child care slots shows the fragility of the local day care market, Foust said, and would have hurt a community still in need of about 500 additional child care slots to support working parents or to attract new families to town.

Meanwhile, "Help Wanted" and "Now Hiring" signs can be found throughout the city, as employers in several industries compete to find skilled workers to support their continued growth and expansion.

Creating a forward vision in 2012

Like many other South Dakota cities with a strong spirit of cooperation and innovation, Watertown leaders in government, business, education, social services and the population at large have a proven track record of banding together to solve big community problems.

In 2012, with strong input from the public, the city launched a "visioning" effort called H2O-20, which used resident input collected via a community survey to guide growth until the year 2020. City leaders were tickled when 2,200 completed surveys were returned.

Mark Roby, then publisher of the Watertown Public Opinion newspaper, was one of the early architects of the first community planning efforts.

"It came about because we kind of were in a malaise as a community," Roby, now retired, told News Watch in an interview. "The goal wasn't to irritate anybody. The goal was real simple: We thought Water-

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town needed a strategic plan to move forward because the strategic planning wasn't there, and the data necessary to make good decisions wasn't there."

A group of local business and community leaders who met frequently over coffee was able raise about \$150,000 to hire a consultant, which then launched what became the H2O-20 planning process, Roby said. Obtaining survey responses from roughly 2,200 residents was a key part of the process and set the table for success, he said.

"We weren't out with a personal agenda. We were out truly with the hearts and minds of 2,200 citizens, and that's the point of this whole thing," Roby said. "The established organizations in town, local government, the Chamber, you name it, they couldn't fight 2,200 responses from the citizens."

Roby still marvels at how the planning process was a successful model of local democracy, ultimately dependent on the involvement of the residents of Watertown and not necessarily by elected or appointed officials.

"Eventually, they embraced it, and it became the playbook for the city," he said. "It guided their capital improvement program and everything else for the next dozen years, and it really gave them a roadmap."

Despite some internal dissent, which was not unexpected, and a bit of wrangling over how to proceed, the process eventually yielded tangible results that will benefit the community for generations to come.

Those efforts included construction of the \$21 million Prairie Lakes Wellness Center in 2017, the \$5 million restoration of the 130-year-old Goss Opera House in 2023 and the building of the \$36.5 million Prairie Lakes Ice Arena that opened this year.

"There were all these big community initiatives that got accomplished and came out of this plan," said Cammie Mengwasser, executive director of the Watertown Area Community Foundation. "It was really grassroots, driven by the community at large and not by the city of Watertown or the city council or any one group because it really was a collective community effort."

A new, 25-year planning effort underway

With those successes in hand, discussions began to launch a new long-range planning effort to guide growth and find solutions for issues that face Watertown today and likely in the future.

In January, the city launched a new community visioning process dubbed H2O-50 (Watertown 2050) to again use community input to drive efforts to keep the city on a path of progress.

After enlisting the aid of Broad Ripple Strategies and Atlas Community Studios, Watertown is in the process of a 4-stage, seven-month process of building a new vision for its future.

According to the consultants, the "community visioning" stage of the process included interviews with nearly two dozen community leaders, seven focus groups with up to 110 attendees, a pair of community discussion sessions and nearly 3,100 responses to a community survey.

In stage 2, the "competitive assessment" segment of the ongoing study, which examines Watertown's economy and lifestyle and compares it to similar-sized cities, the consultants delivered a few key findings:

- The next vision plan should focus less on big building projects and more on "holistic" programs and solutions to community problems.
- Watertown is a safe, friendly, affordable place to raise a family but lacks amenities that can attract young professionals and other new residents.
- Big-picture challenges exist due to a lack of child care, labor force and housing opportunities.

Challenges to attracting new, young residents

Meanwhile, the H2O-50 online community survey brought forward some clear indicators of how residents feel about Watertown and where it could improve.

More than three-quarters of respondents said they would recommend Watertown as a place to live for family or friends, with 18% extremely likely to recommend it. Respondents gave high marks to the community's spirituality and wellness, safety and security and environmental qualities.

But the survey also revealed some big needs in Watertown, including that young professionals believe the city does not do enough or possess the right amenities to attract more young people.

More than 60% of respondents said the city was weak or very weak in terms of housing affordability

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and almost 30% said the city was weak or very weak in housing availability.

About a third of respondents said the city was weak or very weak in regard to access to arts and cultural events, while roughly half said the city was weak or very weak in terms of unique shopping options and opportunities for entertainment and nightlife. Availability of dining options was also noted as a community need.

Mengwasser said the new planning group has initially identified three big challenges to address – housing, child care and workforce – but she expects the process will identify three or more other topics of focus moving forward.

Mengwasser said the next steps in the planning process will include a rollout of the consultant findings at a large community meeting in January (a similar event to introduce the H2O-20 report drew about 700 people). "And that's when the work will really start," she said.

From there, resident committees will form to explore and examine issues revealed in the report, and local groups will then take their suggestions and do the ground-level work to get things done, she said.

"They'll take the ideas, start researching them and then try to find funding to move toward what can ultimately come out of this," she said.

Building a framework for stronger democracy

The planning efforts in Watertown are an excellent example of fostering the democratic process in a community and paving the way for resident engagement in civic affairs, said Julia Hellwege, a professor of political science at the University of South Dakota and director of the Chiesman Center for Democracy at USD.

Cheisman and South Dakota News Watch have embarked on a joint effort, known as "Engage South Dakota," in which the two organizations plan to use journalism and civic engagement as a way to identify and share solutions to problems in cities and towns across the state.

With its successful planning efforts, the city of Watertown has set an example for how other communities in the state can tap public input and combine strong municipal leadership to create a replicable method of overcoming challenges and finding solutions to problems while holding those in power to account, Hellwege said.

"It really is about democratic accountability," she told News Watch. "It's a way for a community to state more clearly what its needs and preferences are."

Once those goals are made clear to all, it is then incumbent on municipal leaders to carry out those assignments in order to accomplish what residents seek in their community, Hellwege said. They can then monitor progress and hold leaders accountable if they do not accomplish stated goals, she said.

The success of such a system relies largely on a willingness of leaders to ask for input and maintain an ongoing dialogue with the constituents they serve, she said.

"Community conversations are really important for democracy and making sure our voices are heard, knowing that we matter to the democratic system, and that we are holding leaders accountable," Hellwege said.

In the coming month, Cheisman will run a community survey in Hot Springs, gather and analyze the data collected and then sponsor a community meeting where goals can be set, Hellwege said. News Watch will share the process and outcomes with its statewide audience.

The goal is to expand the effort elsewhere.

"Watertown might have the resources to do this on their own and that's great, but whenever Chiesman and News Watch can, we're hoping to do this with other communities," she said.

As Watertown showed with its H2O-20 efforts, communities can accomplish far more when united than they can when individuals and institutions work alone in silos, said Foust, the Codington County social services director.

"We are far more powerful as a community," she said. "So, how can we come together as a community and address these issues rather than saying, 'Oh, that's a social service issue and that's a business issue?'" Foust said. "Because ultimately, we need to work together to make things happen and to really be

successful."

Editor's note: South Dakota News Watch independently produced this story with financial support from the Wauertown Area Community Foundation, which did not approve or review the work. Mark Roby, quoted in the story, is a financial supporter of News Watch but also did not approve or review the work. South Dakota News Watch is 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 and content director Bart Pfankuch at bart.pfankuch@sdnewswatch.org.

Moody County Fatal Crash

What: Two vehicle fatal crash
Where: Interstate 29, mile marker 119, 13 miles south of Brookings, SD
When: 5:35 p.m., Sunday, September 8, 2024

Vehicle 1: 2012 Toyota RAV4
Driver 1: 21-year-old male, minor injuries
Seatbelt Use: Yes

Vehicle 2: 2000 Honda VT1100CT
Driver 1: 57-year-old male, fatal injuries
Helmet Use: Under investigation

Moody County, S.D.- A 57-year-old man died Sunday, September 8, from injuries sustained in a two-vehicle crash 13 miles south of Brookings, SD.

The names of the persons involved have not been released pending notification of family members.

Preliminary crash information indicates the driver of a 2012 Toyota Rav4 SUV was traveling northbound on Interstate 29 near mile marker 119 when the vehicle in front of him made a sudden lane change, revealing a motorcycle that appeared to be leaving the shoulder to reenter traffic. The driver of the SUV collided with the motorcycle. The motorcycle entered the east ditch where it rolled, separating the rider from the motorcycle. The driver of the SUV lost control, entered the east ditch and rolled.

The driver of the SUV was transported to a nearby hospital with minor injuries. The driver of the motorcycle was pronounced deceased at the scene.

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.

Fellowship of Christian Students have kickoff event

On Sunday, Fellowship of Christian Students (FCS) had their kickoff meeting for the year. Students opened up with prayer and announcements into voting for school personnel they would like to see in the Dunk Tank at the soccer game on Homecoming Friday Sept 20th. Next a video was played of American Olympians who were bold in their faith, which led to students holding their own opening ceremonies with the 'flaming torch' to competing in races out on the football field. Medals were handed out at the closing ceremony along with the announcement of who would be in the dunk tank.



Opening Ceremony: students walked out with their team and banners. (Courtesy Photo)



Talli Wright and Rylee Dunker run and enjoy the nice weather during the FCS Olympic Events. (Courtesy Photo)



John Bisbee prepares to compete in the running event. (Courtesy Photo)

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Shepherds Team: Kyrie Yeigh, Kinsley Rowen, Kinley Sandness, Abby Fjeldheim and Brynlee Dunker. (Courtesy Photo)



Prophets Team: Brody Lord, Jayden Schwan, Gavin Kroll, Sam Crank, Blake Lord, Logan Olson, Logan Warrington and Drew Fjeldheim.

(Courtesy Photo)



JOE SCHWAN
Superintendent
District Administration



BRETT SCHWAN
Elementary Principal
Elementary



SHELBY EDWARDS
6-12 Principal
MS/HS



SCOTT THORSON
Social Science Teacher
MS/HS



Flaming Torch: Student leader JD Schwan carried out the 'flaming torch.' (Courtesy Photo)

Dunk Tank Participants: The students voted on participants they would like to see in the dunk tank, here are the results/winners! (missing picture Ryan Olson for after soccer game) (Courtesy Photo)

Leaving Our Rural Community Better Than We Found It: The Call to Action for Every Resident



Paul Jensen

When I was a child, my mom ingrained in me the mantra: "Whatever you do, leave it better than you found it."

That statement resonates daily in my work as a community coach with rural leaders. As I help these rural leaders uncover a vision for their community, I often hear the greatest generation reminisce about their community's vibrant past. They express a dream of returning to those days. The reality for most of us, though, is that we never experienced the vibrant community they describe. Instead, as new leaders were handed a community with shuttered Main Street buildings, aging infrastructure, unkempt facilities, and dilapidated houses.

Imagine, however, if each of us committed to leaving our rural community better than we found it. What would we need to do or do differently?



Many of the community and economic development leaders I coach have a vision for their community. They want to leave it better than they found it.

They understand that if we want our rural communities not just to survive but to truly thrive, every resident — starting with themselves — must commit to taking positive action. Our actions today will decide the future we choose to

create and leave to the next generation of leaders. Here's how each of us can make a meaningful difference, starting today.

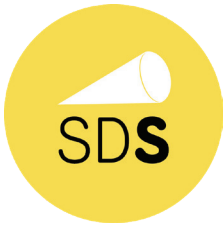
First, we must immediately work to reconnect as a community. A thriving rural area is one where neighbors know each other, engage in critical conversations, value collaborative partnerships, and community pride uplifts us all. Isolation weakens us; connection strengthens us. Get involved today — volunteer with a local organization, organize a neighborhood block party, or reach out to someone in need. These acts aren't just nice ideas; they are critical for fostering a sense of belonging and shared responsibility. If we don't engage with each other, we risk losing the bonds that make our community unique and strong.

Second, we must seize every opportunity to promote "possibility thinking." We can do this by creating a community that learns about available resources. The community should also grow our skills and share what we know. Imagine a rural community where each of us contributes to a pool of knowledge, where local innovation thrives, and where every child dreams big because they see opportunity everywhere. We can't build a stronger community if we don't invest in ourselves and our youth.

Third, we must beautify our community. A welcoming environment fosters pride in every resident and visitor. Imagine every street lined with colorful flower beds, parks filled with trees, and public spaces alive with art and creativity. Every one of us can contribute to this vision. Plant a garden in your front yard or around public spaces. Add a fresh coat of paint to a building that needs it. Organize community mural projects that show our shared heritage and values. Host clean-up drives or tree planting days. These efforts don't just make our surroundings more attractive — they inspire a collective sense of care, pride, and respect for the community.

Finally, collaboration is essential, and it starts with you. Think of what we can achieve together: local businesses bustling with support and a network of neighbors working hand in hand for a common cause. Reach out to local organizations, businesses, and leaders today to propose or support projects that benefit a thriving community. Collective action multiplies our efforts and creates lasting impact. We do have the power to leave our community better than we found it. Our possibility thinking and deliberate efforts can make it a place where the economy is resilient, the spirit of community is unbreakable, and the next generation of leaders will inherit a community they are proud to call home.

The Community Coach. Having a passion for rural community leadership and development is what drives Paula Jensen's personal and professional life. Paula lives in her hometown of Langford, South Dakota, population 318+. She serves as a Strategic Doing practitioner, grant writer and community coach with Dakota Resources based in Renner, South Dakota. Dakota Resources is a mission-driven 501c3 Community Development Financial Institution working to connect capital and capacity to empower rural communities. Contact her at paula@dakotaresources.org. Read more at <https://paulajensenblog.wordpress.com/>



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

New report identifies pollution reductions needed to clean up segment of Big Sioux River

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - SEPTEMBER 9, 2024 5:35 PM

South Dakota environmental regulators are accepting public comments on a new set of draft pollution reduction targets for a 10-mile segment of the Big Sioux River in Brookings County.

The document from the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources proposes "total maximum daily loads," which are the levels of pollution a waterbody can suffer and still meet water quality standards. About 450 square miles of land form the watershed for the river segment from Volga to south of Brookings.

The river segment is too polluted to support some kinds of warmwater fish, according to the department. The problem is "total suspended solids," including soil that washes into the river. Roughly 73% of that soil comes from farms.

"The watershed is used extensively for agriculture, which comprised 88% of the land area in 2017," the department's report says.

The report also notes that wetlands, forests and native grasslands have declined in the watershed.

Fish affected

Travis Entenman is the managing director of Friends of the Big Sioux River. He said suspended solids affect plant and fish life.

"Excessive sedimentation reduces oxygen levels and blocks sunlight that our underwater plants need," he said. "If we had clearer water, more fish — outside of carp — would be able to thrive."

University of South Dakota Sustainability and Environment Professor Mark Sweeney said research shows suspended solids in the Big Sioux have increased in the 2000s compared to the 1970s and '80s. He said the problem is especially bad for filter-feeding fish.

"They basically choke on the sediment," Sweeney said.

He added that other fish dependent on good visibility are also affected.

The segment of the Big Sioux is one of many polluted waterways in South Dakota. A recent report showed about 80% of the rivers, streams and lakes tested in South Dakota are too polluted for at least one of their intended uses.

A goal, not a mandate

The department's recommendations for the 10-mile Big Sioux segment say no water sample should have more than 158 milligrams of suspended particles per liter, and the average should stay below 90 milligrams over any 30 days.

The plan also includes recommendations: relocating livestock away from streams, protecting grasses along streams, conserving wetlands and sloughs, and promoting soil health practices that reduce sediment runoff. It also advises continued funding and marketing of existing financial incentives for those practices.

Existing incentives include a \$3 million state program paying landowners to grow and maintain grass strips along the river and its tributaries. The state pays up to \$575 per acre for cropland and up to \$157 per acre for pastureland enrolled.

Incentives are the primary way the state attempts to achieve cleaner waterways. Jay Gilbertson, manager of the East Dakota Water Development District, based in Brookings, said the state does not mandate action by individual polluters.

"The department says, 'We don't want to make people do anything,'" he said. "Well, that's the problem then."

Entenman agreed, saying he welcomes the development of the total maximum daily loads and the report about where the pollution originates. But, he added, "We need to make sure there is follow-through and these issues are being remedied."

Marisa Lubeck, a spokesperson with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Region 8 Office (which includes South Dakota), sent a statement explaining states and local governments are responsible for ensuring plans are followed.

"The plan provides a foundation to support future implementation, which is led by state and local organizations rather than the federal government," she said.

Public comments on the draft document must be submitted by Sept. 28 and may be emailed to DAN-Rmail@state.sd.us.

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.

COMMENTARY

Just say no to indiscriminate 'vote no' approach on ballot questions

by DANA HESS

SEPTEMBER 9, 2024 10:03 AM

Whether he knows it or not, Chris Larson is channeling Nancy Reagan. Mrs. Reagan asked us to "just say no to drugs." Larson is asking us to say no to four issues that will be on South Dakota's November ballot.

Larson, described in a story from The Dakota Scout as a conservative Republican activist and entrepreneur from Minnehaha County, has set up a website to point out why those four issues aren't worth your vote. The website, votenosd.com, casts a negative light on Amendment H, a call to change the state's primary election system; Referred Law 21, which would repeal a law that regulates carbon capture pipelines; Amendment G, legalizing abortion; and Initiated Measure 29, which would legalize recreational marijuana.

The home page of Larson's site admonishes visitors with this message: "Don't California Our South Dakota." It's as if a yes vote on any of these issues would turn us all into a bunch of San Francisco hippies.

In addition to a raft of candidates on the November ballot, South Dakota voters will also have to decide on a total of seven ballot issues. Larson has something bad to say about four of them but remains mute on the other three.

Those three are Initiated Measure 28, which is intended to eliminate the state sales tax on groceries; Amendment E, on the ballot courtesy of the state Legislature, which would edit male pronouns from the language in the state constitution; and Amendment F, also on the ballot courtesy of the Legislature, which would allow the state to impose work requirement for Medicaid recipients. Instead of being completely negative, it would be refreshing if Larson had something positive to say about these ballot issues that he seems to be endorsing with his silence.

Larson created the website to counter the influence of political action committees and wealthy donors. "With 30 years of starting and running my own business, I recognize slick marketing and sales pitches being put on consumers," Larson stated on his website.

Larson's response to those outside influences was to create a website that's rather, well, slick. But voters are smart enough to know what they're getting into when they visit a site like Larson's.

Larson's one-stop-shop for learning how to vote no is an insult to the intelligence of the state's voters.

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Those voters are completely capable of seeing through slick marketing and sales pitches to form an opinion about what's best for their state. Ballot issues deserve a citizen's patient consideration, not a one-size-fits-all lesson in how to vote no.'

There has to be a better way to educate yourself on the ballot issues. Fox News worked overtime to turn the phrase "fair and balanced" into a punchline, but that's just the kind of coverage of the issues that is needed for voters to make an informed choice at the ballot box.

Fortunately for South Dakota voters, even with the election just more than two months away, there are sources for the kind of reporting that voters need.

South Dakota Searchlight's website, at southdakotasearchlight.com, has a place on its homepage called "South Dakota Election 2024." There readers will find plenty of news and commentary about the election as well as a Voter Guide and links to the secretary of state's website for information on registering to vote, voting early and finding your polling place. It also offers a weekly newsletter from States Newsroom with national and state stories about candidates, the campaigns and the issues.

The homepage for the South Dakota News Watch website, sdnewswatch.org, offers some of the same links to the secretary of state's website in its "South Dakota Voter Guide." Its explanations of the seven ballot issues are taken from the reporting that News Watch has done, offering both sides of the issues without taking sides. Some would call it fair and balanced, but that phrase has been ruined.

For those voters who distrust the media in any form, check the Secretary of State's homepage, sdsos.gov, for the "2024 General Election Ballot Question Information Pamphlet." This printable document includes an explanation of each ballot issue by the state's attorney general as well as pro statements from backers of the ballot issue and con statements from those who would like you to vote no.

Any of those three options is a better way to decide how to mark your ballot than relying on something like Larson's all-negative, all-the-time website.

Dana Hess spent more than 25 years in South Dakota journalism, editing newspapers in Redfield, Milbank and Pierre. He's retired and lives in Brookings, working occasionally as a freelance writer.

Trump and Harris to meet in long-anticipated debate Tuesday night in Philadelphia

BY: ASHLEY MURRAY - SEPTEMBER 9, 2024 4:53 PM

WASHINGTON — Former President Donald Trump and Vice President Kamala Harris will meet in a highly anticipated and potentially consequential debate Tuesday night in Philadelphia — just over two months after President Joe Biden's disastrous debate performance precipitated his exit from the race.

The debate, to be hosted by ABC News, is set for 8 p.m. Central/7 Mountain and will be the first time Trump and Harris will meet in person, according to Harris. Viewers can livestream the debate on ABC.com or on the platforms ABC News Live, Disney+ and Hulu. The debate will also be simulcast on C-SPAN.

The event is the only scheduled televised exchange between the candidates before Election Day in November, though early voting kicks off in the battleground state of Pennsylvania Sept. 16 and in four other states later this month.

'We'll be ready'

Trump surrogates on Monday said the former president plans to challenge Harris on views she's changed over the years, including on fracking and immigration.

"We'll be ready tomorrow, President Trump will be ready. The question is will Kamala Harris be ready because she's gonna have a lot of things to defend," Jason Miller, Trump campaign senior adviser, said on a call organized by the Republican National Committee that also featured Rep. Matt Gaetz of Florida and former Hawaii Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard, a Democratic Party defector who has endorsed Trump.

"You can't prepare for President Trump. There's just no way to do it," Miller later added.

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Trump will also seek to tie Harris to all decisions made under the Biden administration. Gaetz dubbed her "co-president" and alleged on the call that Harris is "in charge of the entire administration."

Republicans are using the narrative to blame Harris for the 2021 U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan in which 13 service members died.

The GOP-led House Committee on Foreign Affairs released a 353-page report Monday blaming the deadly conclusion of the two-decade U.S. war in Afghanistan squarely on the Biden-Harris administration. Harris' last name is mentioned 285 times in the report.

"Kamala Harris is unfit to be our president and commander-in-chief," Gabbard said on the call.

Retired U.S. military leaders issued a letter defending Harris' fitness to lead the country, and blaming Trump's "chaotic approach" to negotiating with the Taliban before leaving office.

"He repeatedly fails to take responsibility for his own role in putting service members in harm's way," the former generals wrote on behalf of the veterans' advocacy group National Security Leaders for America.

Trump attracted his own attention related to the Afghanistan withdrawal when his campaign staffers confronted an Arlington National Cemetery official on Aug. 26, the third anniversary of the 13 service members' deaths. The incident was first reported by NPR.

Trump has denied his staffers pushed the cemetery official aside in order to take photos in a restricted area, but the U.S. Army confirmed the incident.

'Go to Bat 4 Harris'

The vice president prepped for the debate in a Pittsburgh hotel over the weekend before traveling across the swing state Monday for the following night's prime-time event.

The Harris campaign began the week by releasing an ad Monday featuring several former Trump administration officials, including former Vice President Mike Pence and former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Mark Milley, who have spoken out against a second Trump presidency.

The Democratic National Committee flew a banner Monday above Citizens Bank Park in Philadelphia ahead of the division-leading Phillies' home game against the Tampa Bay Rays. The banner read: "Don't Strikeout W/Trump Go to Bat 4 Harris."

After roughly 50 days into her campaign and just 56 days until the election, Harris released her policy platform one day ahead of the debate. The four-pillar plan includes promises to lower taxes on the middle class and build affordable housing, protect reproductive freedoms and civil rights, secure the border and address gun violence, and "stand up to dictators" and support veterans.

Harris also vowed to support an ethics code for the U.S. Supreme Court, and to "ensure that no former president has immunity for crimes committed while in the White House" — a reference to the high court's July ruling that granted former presidents immunity for core official acts and presumptive immunity for "outer perimeter" duties, but none for personal actions.

The Trump campaign accused Harris' platform of "dishonesty" in a campaign email sent Monday. "We know the results of her policies: chaos, devastation and destruction."

Trump and the Republican party released a platform in July that centered on 20 core promises which swore to "seal the border," "carry out the largest deportation operation in American history," and "end inflation," among others.

When asked by reporters Saturday in Pittsburgh's Strip District market area if she was ready to debate Trump, the former California prosecutor and U.S. senator answered, "Yes, I am. Yes."

What's the main message she wants to tell Trump on the debate stage?

"There is a lot," Harris said in response to the question.

"But look, it's time to turn the page on the divisiveness. It's time to bring our country together to chart a new way forward," she said.

Trump's legal issues ahead of debate

While Harris hunkered down for debate prep, Trump has been focusing in recent days on his myriad

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legal issues and hosting long-winded appearances.

On Saturday the former president held court for nearly two hours at a campaign rally in Mosinee, Wisconsin, and repeated a debunked claim that Venezuelan gang members had overtaken an Aurora, Colorado, apartment building. He told the crowd that removing Venezuelan immigrants from the state will "be a bloody story."

He also downplayed his New York state conviction as a "witch hunt," as he has several times before.

Trump, the only former president to become a convicted felon, learned Friday that a Manhattan judge delayed his sentencing until after the November election. Trump was convicted in May of 34 counts of falsifying business records related to a hush money payment to a porn star ahead of the 2016 presidential election.

Trump also spoke for nearly an hour Friday at Trump Tower during what was billed as a press conference but included no questions. The appearance followed oral arguments in his appeal of a civil trial verdict in which he was found liable of sexual abuse and defamation of writer E. Jean Carroll.

On Thursday his lawyers pleaded not guilty on his behalf in federal court to a renewed indictment alleging he co-conspired to subvert the 2020 presidential results. U.S. District Judge Tanya Chutkan set a pre-trial schedule that includes deadlines both before and after November's election.

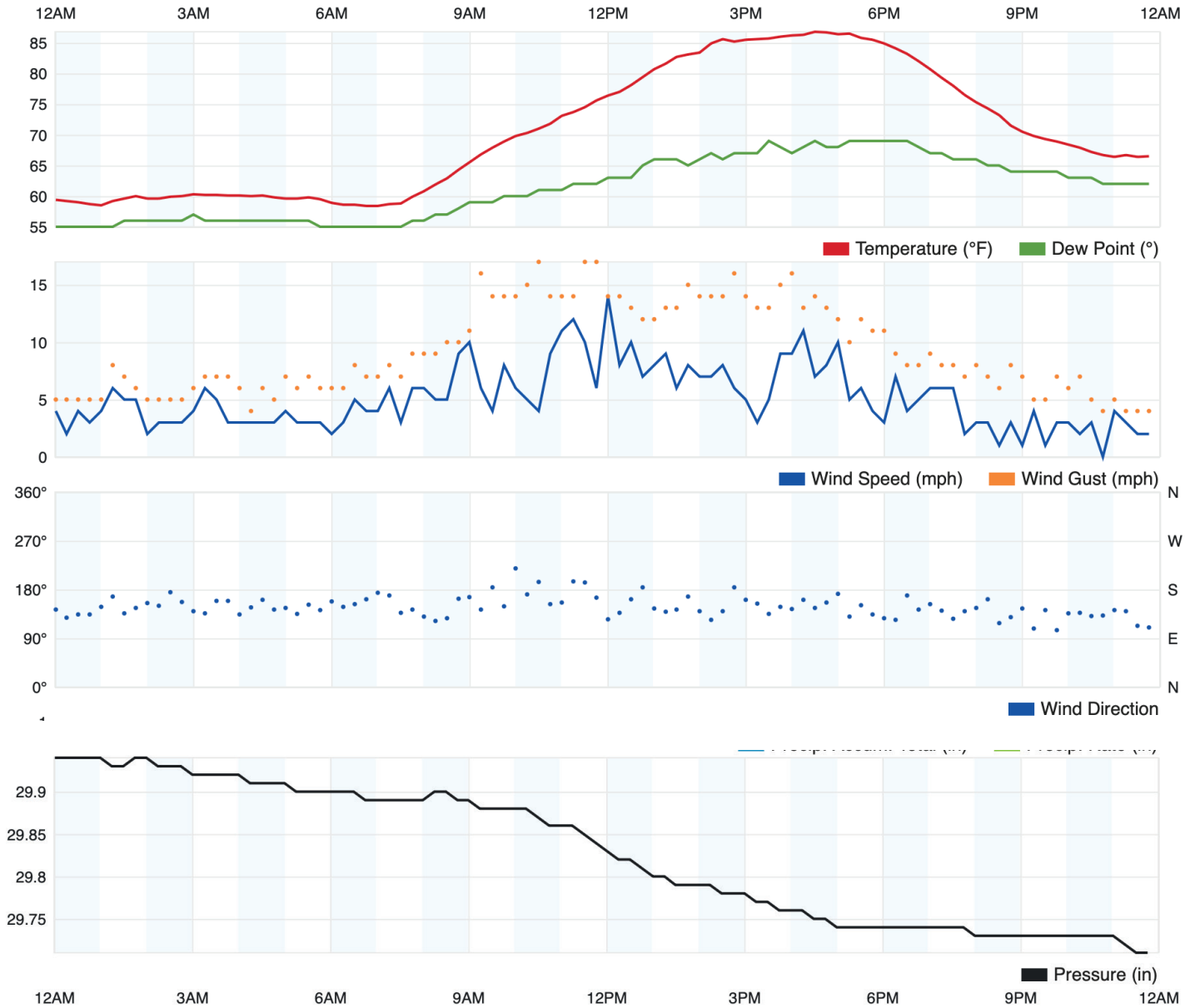
The vice presidential debate between Ohio U.S. Sen. J.D. Vance and Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz is scheduled to be hosted by CBS News in New York City on Oct. 1.

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

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Tuesday



High: 89 °F

Slight Chance
T-storms then
Mostly Sunny

Tuesday Night



Low: 57 °F

Areas Smoke

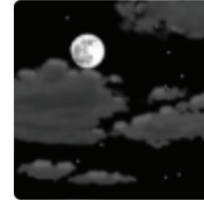
Wednesday



High: 90 °F

Hot

Wednesday
Night



Low: 63 °F

Partly Cloudy

Thursday



High: 87 °F

Sunny and
Breezy

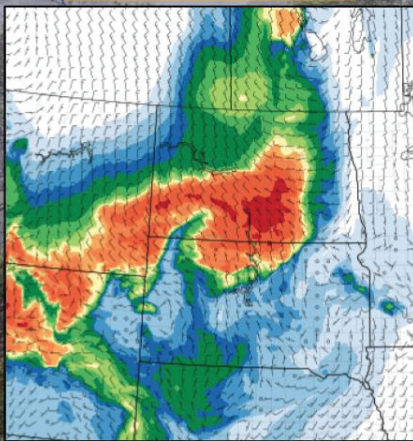


Near-Surface Smoke Today

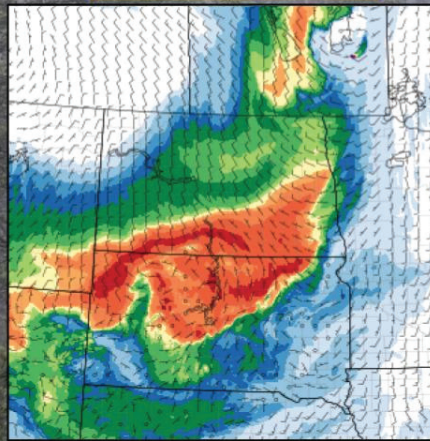
KEY MESSAGES:

- Wildfires off to the west will bring smoke near the surface and aloft over South Dakota with reduced visibilities in some areas.
- Shown below is modeled near-surface smoke progression through today and tonight.
 - Limit prolonged outdoor activity or activity that requires heavy exertion.
- Seniors, children, and those with compromised immune systems will be at greatest risk.

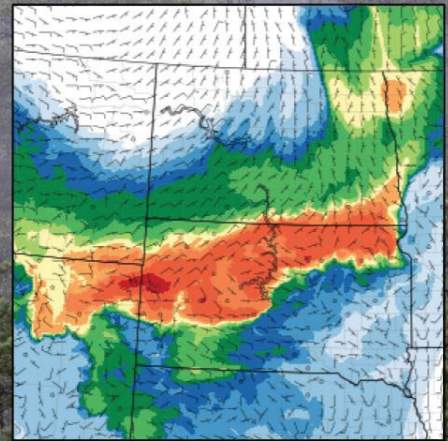
Noon Today



5 PM This Evening



11 PM Tonight



1 2 4 6 8 12 16 20 25 30 40 60 100 200 Near-Surface Smoke ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, shaded)

Thicker plumes of smoke near the surface will be the main concern for today and tonight for portions of central to northeastern SD that may reduce visibilities in some locations. Limit prolonged outdoor activities if you can. Seniors, children, and those with compromised immune systems will be at greatest risk. For Air Quality information for your location, visit: <https://www.airnow.gov> For the Fire and Smoke Map visit: <https://fire.airnow.gov>

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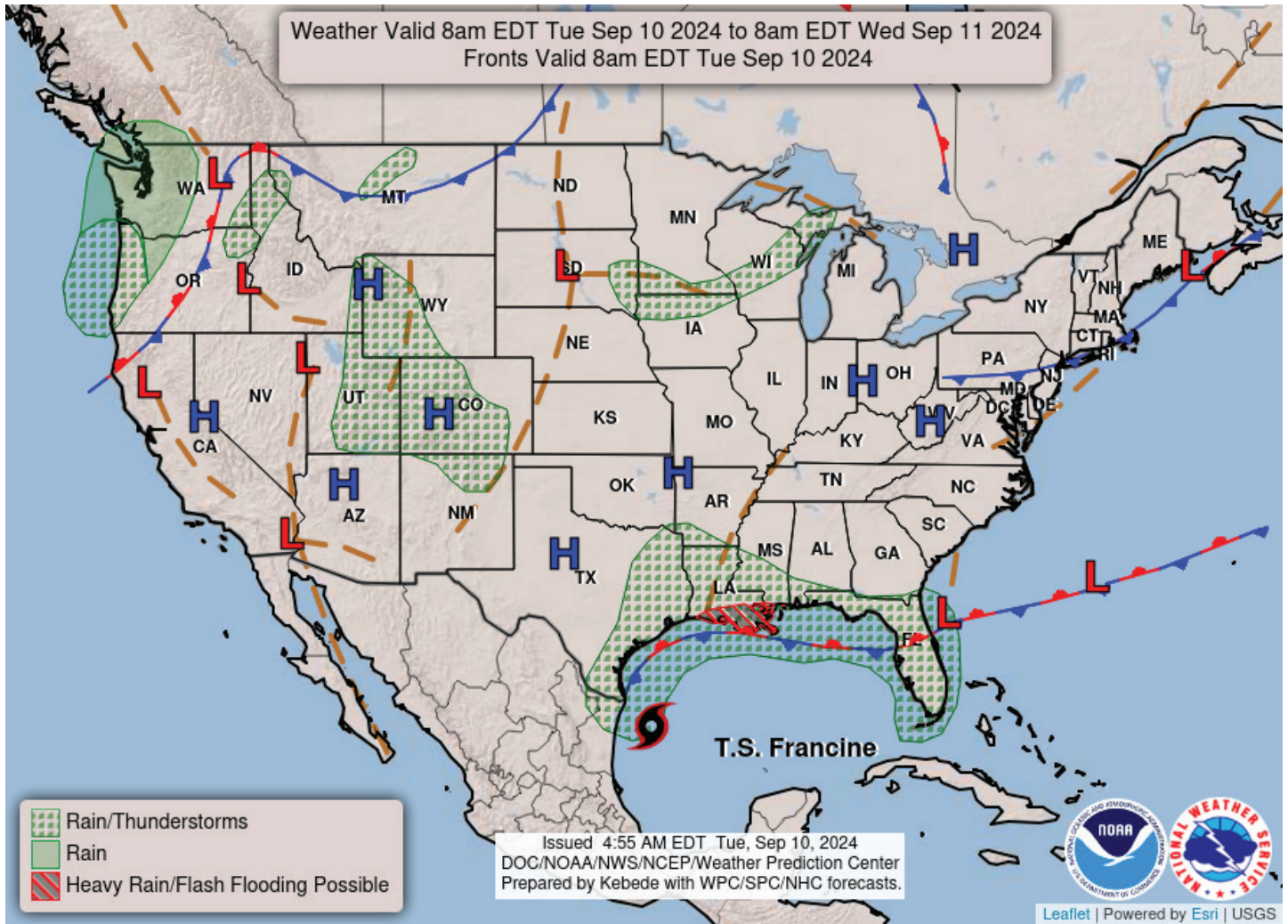
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 87 °F at 4:51 PM
Low Temp: 58 °F at 6:43 AM
Wind: 17 mph at 10:27 AM
Precip: : 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 107 in 1931
Record Low: 27 in 1898
Average High: 77
Average Low: 49
Average Precip in Sept.: 0.68
Precip to date in Sept.: 0.01
Average Precip to date: 17.02
Precip Year to Date: 19.42
Sunset Tonight: 7:53:52 pm
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:05:32 am

Day length: 13 hours, 49 minutes



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Today in Weather History

September 10, 1961: In Webster between 1 and 2 am, a large farm implement was destroyed by a lightning-caused fire. Many farm implements, three cars, two trucks, as well as merchandise, were lost. Nearby buildings suffered damage from fire. The torrential rains helped reduce the spread of the fire.

September 10, 1975: Large hail up to the size of 2 inches in diameter damaged many acres of corn, flax, and millet fields during the evening. The area between Volga and Brookings received the most severe damage.

September 10, 1988: Lightning started fires in Todd County southwest of Mission that burned nearly 14,000 acres of grassland and 4000 acres of timber. The damages were more than 60,000 dollars.

1811: South Carolina was hit by a hurricane. The main highlight associated with the hurricane was a tornado that damaged downtown Charleston. Click [HERE](#) for a tweet from Cary Mock, Professor at the University of South Carolina.

1919 - A hurricane struck the Florida Keys drowning more than 500 persons. (David Ludlum)

1960: The center of Hurricane Donna passed over the middle of the Florida Keys between 2, and 3 am on this day. Donna was a Category 5 hurricane over the Atlantic and a Category 4 at landfall. This storm caused the deaths of over 100 in Puerto Rico, 50 in the United States, and 63 in a jet crash. The plane crash occurred on August 29th as a French airliner was attempting to land at Dakar, Senegal during a "blinding rainstorm." The storm was likely a tropical disturbance at the time of the crash.

1961: On September 10th, the Television Infrared Observation Satellite observed an area of thunderstorms west-southwest of the Cape Verde Islands, suggesting a possible tropical cyclone. This storm is the first large tropical cyclone to be discovered on satellite imagery and would eventually become Hurricane Esther.

1987 - A late afternoon thunderstorm roared through Austin TX producing wind gusts to 81 mph, and 2.17 inches of rain in just sixty minutes. The high winds toppled six National Guard helicopters at the Robert Mueller Municipal Airport, and damaged or destroyed numerous other aircraft. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Cool air sweeping into the north central U.S. brought snow to some of the higher elevations of Montana. The town of Kings Hill, southeast of Great Falls, was blanketed with six inches of snow. Tropical Storm Gilbert strengthened to a hurricane over the eastern Caribbean. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Light snow fell in Montana overnight, with three inches reported at Fairfield. Billings MT reported a record low of 33 degrees. Unseasonably warm weather prevailed in the northeastern U.S., with record highs of 86 degrees at Caribou ME and 90 degrees at Burlington VT. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1998: Tropical Storm Frances made landfall near Matagorda Bay, TX, causing the worst coastal flooding and beach erosion since Hurricane Carla in 1961. The storm's heavy rains ended a drought in East Texas but caused severe river flooding in parts of Texas and Louisiana. The highest rainfall total noted was 21.10 inches at Terrytown in southeast Louisiana. A major disaster declaration was issued for Cameron, Jefferson, Lafourche, and Terrebonne parishes in Louisiana.

2017: Hurricane Irma crossed the Florida Keys as a Category 4 storm



HOW MUCH GOOD SHOULD WE HAVE?

It was the first parent-teacher conference of the year. Mrs. Adams was a bit fearful as she entered her son's classroom. Seated across from her son's teacher, she did not know what to expect.

"Mrs. Adams," she began, "it is a delight to have your son as a student in my class. He is so good!"

"My son?" gasped Mrs. Adams. She was shocked beyond belief.

"Yes. Charles is a model student," the teacher continued.

Then, turning to her son, Mrs. Adams said to Charles, "Your teacher said that you are a good student. Even a model student. Why can't you be good at home?"

"Well, Mom," he replied slowly, "I only got so much goodness in me, and I decided to use it in school."

Goodness is an expression of "God-like-ness" that should reside inside of every believer and find its way outside of us in showing God's grace to others. God-like-ness should come easily, naturally and constantly in our relationships with others.

As we become more of who God wants us to be, we must allow Him to move freely in us and through us. As we sense His love flooding into our hearts, showing God-like-ness should not be something we force ourselves to do. Rather, it is something we do without even thinking about it because we are a child of God.

Prayer: Help us, Heavenly Father, to express Your goodness to others as You have expressed it to us. May our goodness to others reflect Your love for them. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers. Galatians 6:10

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 16 Hrs 13 Mins
DRAW: 52 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.09.24

1 10 20 24 40 1

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$8,650,000

NEXT 1 Days 15 Hrs 28
DRAW: Mins 52 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.09.24

16 26 30 35 46 6

TOP PRIZE:
\$7,000/week

NEXT 15 Hrs 43 Mins
DRAW: 53 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.07.24

1 3 6 22 31

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$26,000

NEXT 1 Days 15 Hrs 43
DRAW: Mins 53 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.09.24

10 14 38 42 45 26

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT 1 Days 16 Hrs 12
DRAW: Mins 52 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.09.24

1 16 21 47 60 5

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$134,000,000

NEXT 1 Days 16 Hrs 12
DRAW: Mins 52 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

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Upcoming Groton Events

- 07/04/2024 Firecracker Couples Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 07/09/2024 FREE SNAP Application Assistance 1-6pm at the Community Center
- 07/14/2024 Lion's Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm
- 07/17/2024 Legion Auxiliary #39 Salad Buffet & Dessert Bar at the Groton Legion 11am-1pm
- 07/17/2024 Pro Am Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 07/25/2024 Dairy Queen Miracle Treat Day
- 07/25/2024 Summer Downtown Sip & Shop 5-8pm
- 07/25/2024 Treasures Amidst The Trials 6pm at Emmanuel Lutheran Church
- 07/26/2024 Ferney Open Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 9am Start
- 07/27/2024 1st Annual Celebration in the Park 1-9:30pm
- 08/05/2024 School Supply Drive 4-7pm at the Community Center
- Cancelled:** Wine on 9 at Olive Grove Golf Course 6pm
- 08/08/2024 Family Fun Fest 5:30-7:30pm
- 08/9-11/2024 Jr. Legion State Baseball Tournament
- 08/12/2024 Vitalant Blood Drive at the Community Center 1:15-7pm
- 09/07/2024 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm
- 09/07-08/2024 Groton Airport Fly-In/Drive-In, Groton Municipal Airport
- 09/08/2024 Sunflower Couples Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 10am
- 10/05/2024 Pumpkin Fest at the City Park 10am-3pm
- 10/11/2024 Lake Region Marching Band Festival 10am
- 10/31/2024 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm
- 10/31/2024 United Methodist Church Trunk or Treat 5:30-7pm
- 11/16/2024 Groton American Legion "Turkey Raffle" 6:30-11:30pm
- 11/28/2024 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm
- 12/01/2024 Groton Snow Queen Contest, 4:30 p.m.
- 12/07/2024 Olive Grove 8th Annual Holiday Party & Tour of Homes with Live & Silent Auctions 6pm-close
- 04/12/2025 Lion's Club Easter Egg Hunt at the City Park 10am Sharp
- 05/03/2025 Lion's Club Spring Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm
- 05/26/2025 Memorial Day Services Groton Union Cemetery with lunch at Legion Post #39, 12pm
- 07/04/2025 Firecracker Couples Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 07/13/2025 Lion's Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm
- 09/06/2025 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm
- 10/31/2025 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm
- 11/27/2025 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm

News from the **AP** Associated Press

Monday's Scores

The Associated Press

PREP VOLLEYBALL=

Canton def. Lennox, 25-18, 25-19, 25-14

Hamlin def. Elkton-Lake Benton, 25-23, 25-15, 16-25, 17-25, 15-9

McLaughlin def. North Central, 25-10, 25-3, 25-14

Milbank def. Wheaton/Herman-Norcross, Minn., 25-22, 25-20, 25-18

Watertown def. Yankton, 25-14, 25-14, 25-16

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

Courts in Nebraska and Missouri weigh arguments to keep abortion measures off the ballot

By MARGERY A. BECK and SUMMER BALLENTINE Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — With ballot deadlines approaching, courts in Nebraska and Missouri are weighing legal arguments that could take measures seeking to expand abortion rights out of the hands of voters.

In Missouri, a day before the state's Supreme Court plans to hear arguments over whether a proposed abortion-rights amendment will go before voters, Republican Secretary of State Jay Ashcroft decertified the measure, removing it from the ballot himself.

Monday's move by Ashcroft, who opposes abortion, is largely symbolic. The Supreme Court is expected to have the final say on whether the measure, which is designed to undo Missouri's near-total abortion ban, should go before voters or not.

Tuesday's Missouri Supreme Court hearing is mere hours before the state's deadline to make changes to this year's ballot.

In Nebraska, the Supreme Court heard arguments Monday in three lawsuits that seek to keep one or both of the state's competing abortion initiatives off the ballot.

One initiative would enshrine in the Nebraska Constitution the right to have an abortion until viability, or later to protect the health of the pregnant woman. The other would write into the constitution Nebraska's current 12-week abortion ban, passed by the Legislature in 2023, which includes exceptions for rape, incest and the life of the pregnant woman.

Two lawsuits — one brought by an Omaha resident and the other by a Nebraska neonatologist who both oppose abortion — argue that the measure seeking to expand abortion rights violates the state's prohibition against addressing more than one subject in a bill or ballot proposal. They say the ballot measure deals with abortion rights until viability, abortion rights after viability to protect the woman's health and whether the state should be allowed to regulate abortion, amounting to three separate issues.

But lawyers opposing the abortion rights measure spent much of their time challenging the language of the proposal, with attorney Brenna Grasz insisting that its wording that "all persons" shall have a fundamental right to abortion would extend abortion rights to third parties. An example would be parents seeking to force a minor child to get an abortion.

"Is this a single-subject argument?" Chief Justice Mike Heavican asked.

Attorney Matt Heffron with the conservative Chicago nonprofit Thomas More Society, which has filed lawsuits across the country to challenge abortion rights, argued that the Protect Our Rights initiative log-rolls competing subjects into one measure. It would force voters who support abortion up to the point of fetal viability to also support abortion after that point to protect the health of the mother, which they may not want to do, he said.

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"This is a sea change in the current Nebraska law, which was popularly enacted by representatives, and each one of these should be voted on by the voters separately," Heffron said.

Heavican countered that "virtually every bill that has gone through the Legislature" dealing with abortion has also included the subjects of exceptions and state regulation.

Heffron answered that lawmakers had the benefit of time and expertise to "hash out the terms" of those bills and that voters will go into the voting booth much less informed. But the justices noted that a nearly identical single-subject argument on an abortion rights ballot measure before the conservative Florida Supreme Court earlier this year failed.

An attorney for the lawsuit challenging the 12-week ban initiative argued that if the high court finds that the abortion rights measure fails the single-subject test, it must also find that the 12-week ban initiative fails it, too.

Attorney David Gacioch, of Boston, said that under the theory floated by opposing attorneys, the 12-week ban measure would loop in at least six separate subjects to include regulating abortion in the first, second and third trimesters and separate exceptions for rape, incest and the life of the mother.

Gacioch acknowledged that insisting on separate ballot measures for each of those issues would be as specious as trying to break down the abortion rights measure into separate issues.

"We don't think that's what this court has articulated under a single-subject test," Gacioch said. "We think that would frustrate the rights of the voters to pass constitutional amendments as reflected in the Constitution."

The state's high court has offered a mixed bag on single-subject law challenges. In 2020, the Nebraska Supreme Court blocked a ballot initiative seeking to legalize medical marijuana after finding that its provisions to allow people to use marijuana and to produce it were separate subjects that violated the state's single-subject rule.

But in July, the high court ruled that a hybrid bill passed by the Legislature in 2023 combining the 12-week abortion ban with another measure to limit gender-affirming health care for minors does not violate the single-subject rule. That led to a scathing dissent by Justice Lindsey Miller-Lerman, who accused the majority of applying different standards to bills passed by the Legislature and those sought by voter referendum.

The court agreed to expedite Monday's hearing as state law requires the November ballot to be certified by Friday.

Abortion is currently on the November ballot in nine states. Additionally, a measure in New York would bar discrimination based on pregnancy outcomes but does not mention abortion specifically.

Abortion rights advocates have historically prevailed most of the time it's been before voters – including on all seven ballot measures since the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* in 2022 and ended a nationwide right to abortion. Since the ruling, most Republican-controlled states have implemented bans or restrictions – including 14 that now bar abortion at all stages of pregnancy.

With such high stakes, there have been court fights over most of the measures. An Arizona Supreme Court ruling is letting the state refer to an embryo or fetus as an "unborn human being" in a pamphlet; courts in Arkansas found paperwork problems with initiative submissions and kept the measure off the ballot. A measure is on the ballot in South Dakota, but an anti-abortion group is trying to keep the votes from being counted.

Two workers die after being trapped inside a South Dakota farm silo

VOLGA, S.D. (AP) — Two people have died in an accident at a farm silo in South Dakota.

The Brookings County Sheriff's Office said in a Facebook post that the accident happened just before noon Saturday on a farm near Volga in eastern South Dakota.

The sheriff's office said 51-year-old Larry Dalzell of Murfreesboro, Tennessee, and 41-year-old Randi Vandekieft of Warner Robins, Georgia, were working to repair a damaged roof on top of a silo that stood 80 feet (24.4 meters) tall.

Dalzell and Vandekieft became trapped inside the silo "and are believed to have been overtaken by toxic gas," the sheriff's office said. Rescuers got them out, but both were pronounced dead. It was unclear how the workers ended up inside the silo, which was nearly full.

Google loses final EU court appeal against 2.4 billion euro fine in antitrust shopping case

By KELVIN CHAN AP Business Writer

LONDON (AP) — Google lost its final legal challenge on Tuesday against a European Union penalty for giving its own shopping recommendations an illegal advantage over rivals in search results, ending a long-running antitrust case that came with a whopping fine.

The European Union's Court of Justice upheld a lower court's decision, rejecting the company's appeal against the 2.4 billion euro (\$2.7 billion) penalty from the European Commission, the 27-nation bloc's top antitrust enforcer.

"By today's judgment, the Court of Justice dismisses the appeal and thus upholds the judgment of the General Court," the court said in a press release summarizing its decision.

The commission's punished the Silicon Valley giant in 2017 for unfairly directing visitors to its own Google Shopping service to the detriment of competitors. It was one of three multibillion-euro fines that the commission imposed on Google in the previous decade as Brussels started ramping up its crackdown on the tech industry.

"We are disappointed with the decision of the Court, which relates to a very specific set of facts," Google said in a brief statement.

The company said it made changes in 2017 to comply with the commission's decision requiring it to treat competitors equally. It started holding auctions for shopping search listings that it would bid for alongside other comparison shopping services.

"Our approach has worked successfully for more than seven years, generating billions of clicks for more than 800 comparison shopping services," Google said.

At the same time, the company appealed the decision to the courts. But the EU General Court, the tribunal's lower section, rejected its challenge in 2021 and the Court of Justice's adviser later recommended rejecting the appeal.

European consumer group BEUC hailed the court's decision, saying it shows how the bloc's competition law "remains highly relevant" in digital markets.

"Google harmed millions of European consumers by ensuring that rival comparison shopping services were virtually invisible," director general Agustín Reyna said. "Google's illegal practices prevented consumers from accessing potentially cheaper prices and useful product information from rival comparison shopping services on all sorts of products, from clothes to washing machines."

Google is still appealing the other two EU antitrust penalties, which involved its Android mobile operating system and AdSense advertising platform. The company was dealt a setback in the Android case when the EU General Court upheld the commission's 4.125 billion euro fine in a 2022 decision. Its initial appeal against a 1.49 billion euro fine in the AdSense case has yet to be decided.

Those three cases foreshadowed expanded efforts by regulators worldwide to crack down on the tech industry. The EU has since opened more investigations into Big Tech companies and drew up a new law to prevent them from cornering online markets, known as the Digital Markets Act.

European Commissioner Margrethe Vestager said that the shopping case was one of the first attempts to regulate a digital company and inspired similar efforts worldwide.

"The case was symbolic because it demonstrated even the most powerful tech companies could be held accountable. No one is above the law," Vestager told a press briefing in Brussels.

Vestager, who's expected set to step down in October as the commissioner overseeing competition issues after 10 years on the job, said the commission will continue to open competition cases even as it enforces the Digital Markets Act. The DCA is a sweeping rulebook that forces Google and other tech giants to give

consumers more choice by following a set of dos and don'ts.

Google is also now facing particular pressure over its lucrative digital advertising business from the EU, which is carrying out an investigation, and authorities elsewhere.

In a federal antitrust trial that began Monday, the U.S. Department of Justice alleges that the company holds a monopoly in the "ad tech" industry.

British competition regulators, meanwhile, accused Google last week of abusing its dominance in ad tech.

An Israeli strike on a Gaza humanitarian zone tent camp kills at least 40 people, Palestinians say

By WAFAA SHURAF, MOHAMMAD JAHJOUH and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — An Israeli strike on a crowded tent camp housing Palestinians displaced by the war in Gaza killed at least 40 people and wounded 60 early on Tuesday, Palestinian officials said. Israel said it targeted senior Hamas militants and disputed the death toll.

The overnight strike was among the deadliest yet in Muwasi, a sprawl of crowded tent camps along the Gaza coast that Israel designated as a humanitarian zone for hundreds of thousands of civilians to seek shelter from the Israel-Hamas war.

Gaza's Civil Defense said its first responders recovered 40 bodies from the strike and were still looking for people. It said entire families were killed in their tents.

Associated Press footage shows three large craters at the scene. First responders dug through the sand and rubble with garden tools and their bare hands, using mobile phone flashlights until the sun came up. They pulled body parts from the sand, including what appeared to be a human leg.

"We were told to go to Muwasi, to the safe area... Look around you and see this safe place," said Iyad Hamed Madi, who had been sheltering there.

"This is for my son," he said, holding up a bag of diapers. "He's 4 months old. Is he a fighter? There's no humanity."

One of three hospitals that took in casualties from the strike, Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis, said around two dozen bodies were brought in. An Associated Press cameraman saw 10 bodies in the hospital's morgue, including two children and three women.

"We were sleeping, and suddenly it was like a tornado," Samar Moamer told the AP at the hospital, where she was being treated for injuries from the strike. She said one of her daughters was killed and the other was pulled alive from the rubble.

The Israeli military said it had struck Hamas militants in a command-and-control center embedded in the area. It identified three of the militants, saying they were senior operatives who were directly involved in the Oct. 7 attack and other recent attacks against Israel and Israeli forces.

Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, an Israeli military spokesperson, disputed the reported number of casualties in a post on the platform X, saying the reports "do not line up with the information available to the (Israeli army), the precise weapons used and the accuracy of the strike."

Hamas released a statement denying any militants were in the area, calling the Israeli allegations a "blatant lie." Neither Israel nor Hamas provided evidence to substantiate their claims.

Israel says it tries to avoid harming civilians throughout the war and blames Hamas for their deaths because the militants often operate in residential areas and are known to position tunnels, rocket launchers and other infrastructure near homes, schools and mosques.

In July, Israel carried out a strike in the humanitarian zone that killed at least 90 Palestinians. The military said it targeted and killed Mohammed Deif, the shadowy leader of Hamas' military wing, but Hamas says Deif is still alive.

International law allows for strikes on military targets in areas where civilians are present, provided the force used is proportionate to the military objective — something that is often disputed and would need to be settled in a court, which almost never happens.

The war has caused vast destruction and displaced around 90% of Gaza's population of 2.3 million, often

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multiple times. Israeli evacuation orders, which now cover around 90% of the territory, have pushed hundreds of thousands of people into Muwasi, where aid groups have struggled to provide even basic services.

Gaza's Health Ministry says over 40,900 Palestinians have been killed since the war began. The ministry does not distinguish between civilians and militants in its count, but says that women and children make up just over half of the dead. Israel says it has killed more than 17,000 militants in the war.

Hamas-led fighters killed some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, in their Oct. 7 attack on Israel. They abducted another 250 people and are still holding around 100 hostages after releasing most of the rest in exchange for Palestinians imprisoned by Israel during a weeklong cease-fire last November. Around a third of the remaining hostages are believed to be dead.

The United States and mediators Egypt and Qatar have spent much of this year trying to broker an agreement for a cease-fire and the release of the hostages, but the talks have repeatedly bogged down as Israel and Hamas have accused each other of making new and unacceptable demands.

Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant told reporters on Monday that conditions are ripe for at least a six-week pause in the fighting that would include the release of many of the hostages still held in Gaza. However, he would not commit to a permanent end to the fighting, as Hamas has demanded, raising questions about the feasibility of a deal.

The war has plunged Gaza into a severe humanitarian crisis, and aid groups have struggled to operate because of ongoing fighting, Israeli restrictions, and the breakdown of law and order. The international authority on the severity of hunger crises said in June that the territory is at high risk of famine.

The main United Nations agency providing aid to Palestinians said Israeli troops stopped a convoy taking part in a polio vaccination campaign for more than eight hours on Monday, despite it coordinating with the military.

UNRWA head Philippe Lazzarini said the staffers who were held had been taking part in the campaign in northern Gaza and Gaza City. He wrote on the social media platform X that the convoy was stopped at gunpoint and that "heavy damages was caused by bulldozers" to the U.N. armored vehicles.

The Israeli military said it held up the convoy based on intelligence indicating the presence of suspected militants. It said the suspects were questioned and released. Israel has long accused UNRWA of having ties to militant groups, allegations the U.N. agency denies.

The vaccination drive, launched after doctors discovered the first polio case in the Palestinian enclave in 25 years, aims to vaccinate 640,000 children during a war that has destroyed the health care system.

Pope Francis' Mass in East Timor draws 600,000 people, nearly half the population

By HELENA ALVES, NICOLE WINFIELD and NINIEK KARMINI Associated Press

TASITOLU, East Timor (AP) — An estimated 600,000 people — nearly half of East Timor's population — packed a seaside park Tuesday for Pope Francis' final Mass, held on the same field where St. John Paul II prayed 35 years ago during the nation's fight for independence from Indonesia.

The remarkable turnout was a testament to the overwhelmingly Catholic Southeast Asian country and the esteem with which its people hold the church, which stood by the Timorese in their traumatic battle for freedom and helped draw international attention to their plight.

Francis delighted them on Tuesday, staying at Tasitolu park until well after nightfall to loop around the field in his open-topped popemobile, with the screens of the crowd's cellphones lighting up the evening.

"I wish for you peace, that you keep having many children, and that your smile continues to be your children," Francis said in his native Spanish.

Other papal Masses have drawn millions of people in more populous countries, such as the Philippines, and there were other nationalities represented at Tuesday's Mass. But the crowd in East Timor, population 1.3 million, was believed to represent the biggest turnout for a papal event ever, in terms of the proportion of the national population.

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The Tasitolu park was a sea of yellow and white umbrellas — the colors of the Holy See flag — as Timorese shielded themselves from the afternoon sun awaiting Francis' arrival. They got occasional spritzes of relief from water trucks that plied the field with hoses.

"We are very happy that the pope came to Timor because it gives a blessing to our land and our people," said Dirce Maria Teresa Freitas, 44, who arrived at the field at 9 a.m. from Baucau, more than seven hours early.

Tasitolu is said to have been a site where Indonesian troops disposed of bodies killed during their 24-year rule of East Timor. As many as 200,000 people were killed over a quarter-century. Now it is known as the "Park of Peace" and features a larger-than-life-sized statue of John Paul to commemorate his Oct. 12, 1989 Mass, when the Polish pope shamed Indonesia for its human rights abuses and encouraged the overwhelmingly Catholic Timorese faithful.

Francis was following in John Paul's footsteps during his visit to cheer on the nation two decades after it became independent in 2002. East Timor, known also as Timor-Leste, remains one of the poorest countries, with some 42% living below the poverty line, according to the U.N. Development Program.

But the Timorese are deeply faithful — some 97% are Catholic ever since Portuguese explorers first arrived in the early 1500s.

Cardinal Carmo da Silva, the archbishop of Dili, told the crowd at the end of the Mass that John Paul's visit "marked the decisive step in our process of self-determination," and that Francis' visit to the same place "marks a fundamental step in the process of building our country, its identity and its culture."

In the days leading up to Francis' trip, authorities said some 300,000 people had registered through their dioceses to attend the Mass, but President Jose Ramos-Horta said he expected 700,000 and the Vatican had predicted as many as 750,000.

Once the Mass got under way, Vatican spokesman Matteo Bruni cited crowd estimates by local organizers that 600,000 people were attending in the Tasitolu park and surrounding areas.

They lined up before dawn to enter the park, on the coast about 8 kilometers (nearly 5 miles) from downtown Dili. With hours to go until the service, the roads leading to it were jammed by cars, trucks and buses packed with people; others walked down the middle of the street, ignoring the sidewalks. Temperatures reached 31 degrees Celsius (88 degrees Fahrenheit), and felt even hotter with humidity over 50%.

"For us, the pope is a reflection of the Lord Jesus, as a shepherd who wants to see his sheep, so we come to him with all our hearts as our worship," said Alfonso de Jesus, who also came from Baucau, the country's second-largest city after Dili.

De Jesus, 56, was among the estimated 100,000 people who attended John Paul's 1989 Mass, which made headlines around the world because of a riot that broke out just as it was ending. John Paul looked on as baton-wielding Indonesian plainclothes police clashed with some 20 young men who shouted "Viva a independência" and "Viva el Papa!"

According to Associated Press reporting at the time, the men unfurled a banner in front of the altar and hurled chairs at police. One banner read "Fretilin Welcomes You," a reference to the independence movement that fought Indonesian rule since East Timor was annexed in 1976 after Portugal dismantled its centuries-old colonial empire.

Four women were reported hospitalized with injuries suffered after being crushed in the surging crowd. The pope wasn't harmed. Amnesty International later expressed concern that some 40 people had been detained and tortured, though Indonesian authorities at the time denied any arrests or torture.

"The Mass was run very neat and orderly with very tight security," De Jesus recalled more than three decades later. "But it was crushed by a brief riot at the end of the event."

Many of the reports at the time quoted Dili Bishop Carlos Ximenes Belo in trying to draw attention to the plight of the Timorese people. Belo would go on to win the Nobel Peace Prize with Ramos-Horta for their efforts to peacefully resolve the Timorese conflict.

But Belo has since had his legacy tarnished, at least outside of East Timor, after the Vatican revealed in 2022 that he had been sanctioned for sexually abusing young boys. Now living in Portugal and blocked by the Vatican from having contact with East Timor, Belo's historic role has been seemingly erased from any

official mention during Francis' visit, even while ordinary Timorese still revere him as a hero.

Sister Maria Josefa, a nun from Cape Verde who has lived in Dili for five years, said Francis was right to speak out generally about "abuse" when he arrived in Dili on Monday, saying his were words of compassion, even if he didn't mention Belo by name.

"Unfortunately, the church is made of saints and sinners, but the pope left it within the open that God does not allow for such practices," she said. "We simply need to correct, to understand those who fell and also try to lift those who have endured such torture."

A woman is killed near Moscow as over 140 Ukrainian drones target Russia, officials say

By The Associated Press undefined

Over 140 Ukrainian drones targeted multiple Russian regions overnight, including Moscow and surrounding areas, killing at least one person, officials said Tuesday, in one of the biggest drone attacks on Russian soil in the 2 1/2-year war.

A woman died and three people were injured in the town of Ramenskoye, just outside Moscow, where drones hit two multistory residential buildings and started fires, Moscow region Gov. Andrei Vorobyov said. Five residential buildings were evacuated due to falling drone debris, Vorobyov said.

The attack also prompted the authorities to temporarily shut down three airports just outside Moscow — Vnukovo, Domodedovo and Zhukovsky. A total of 48 flights were diverted to other airports, according to Russia's civil aviation authority, Rosaviatsia.

It was the second massive Ukrainian drone attack on Russia this month. On Sept. 1, the Russian military said it intercepted 158 Ukrainian drones over more than a dozen Russian regions in what Russian media described as the biggest Ukrainian drone barrage since the start of the war. Russia's Investigative Committee announced a criminal investigation into what it described as a terror attack.

Russia, meanwhile, has pummeled Ukraine with missiles, glide bombs and its own drones, killing over 10,000 civilians, according to the United Nations.

Ukraine has invested a lot of effort in developing domestic drone production, extending the drones' range, payload and uses. It has increasingly used drone blitzes to slow Russia's war machine, disrupt Russian society and poke the Kremlin.

Ukrainian officials have complained that weapons pledged by the country's Western partners fall short of what the Ukrainian military needs and commonly arrive long after they were promised. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has urged defense companies to increase their output.

On the battlefield's 1,000-kilometer (600-mile) front line, Ukrainian troops are up against Russia's larger and better-equipped army. The two sides are especially contesting parts of eastern Ukraine's Donetsk region, fighting over towns and villages that are bombed-out wrecks, while Ukraine last month launched a bold incursion into Russia's Kursk border region.

In Moscow on Monday night, drone debris fell on a private house on the outskirts of the city, but no one was hurt, Mayor Sergei Sobyanin said. He counted over a dozen drones heading toward Moscow that were shot down by air defenses as they were approaching the city.

Overall, Russia's Defense Ministry said it "intercepted and destroyed" 144 Ukrainian drones over nine Russian regions, including those on the border with Ukraine and those deeper inside Russia.

Francine gains strength and is expected to be a hurricane when it reaches US Gulf Coast

By SARA CLINE and JAMIE STENGLE Associated Press

BATON ROUGE, La. (AP) — Tropical Storm Francine churned in the Gulf of Mexico with increasing strength and was expected to reach hurricane status on Tuesday before reaching landfall in Louisiana.

A storm surge warning was in effect for an area stretching from just east of Houston to the mouth of

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the Mississippi River south of New Orleans, according to the National Hurricane Center. Such a warning means there's a chance of life-threatening flooding.

Louisiana Gov. Jeff Landry urged residents "not to panic, but be prepared" and heed evacuation warnings. Forecasters said Francine's landfall in south Louisiana was expected Wednesday afternoon as a Category 2 hurricane with winds of 96 to 110 mph (155-175 kph).

"We do not want people to wait to the last minute to get on the road and then run out of fuel," Landry said. "We put a lot of information throughout the summer, throughout hurricane season, so that people can be prepared. The more prepared we are, the easier it is for us."

Francine is taking aim at a Louisiana coastline that has yet to fully recover since hurricanes Laura and Delta decimated Lake Charles in 2020, followed a year later by Hurricane Ida. Over the weekend, a 22-story building in Lake Charles that had become a symbol of storm destruction was imploded after sitting vacant for nearly four years, its windows shattered and covered in shredded tarps.

Francine's storm surge on the Louisiana coast could reach as much as 10 feet (3 meters) from Cameron to Port Fourchon and into Vermilion Bay, forecasters said.

"It's a potential for significantly dangerous, life-threatening inundation," said Michael Brennan, director of the hurricane center, adding it could also send "dangerous, damaging winds quite far inland."

He said landfall was likely somewhere between Sabine Pass — on the Texas-Louisiana line — and Morgan City, Louisiana, about 220 miles (350 kilometers) to the east.

Louisiana officials urged residents to immediately prepare while "conditions still allow," said Mike Steele, spokesperson for the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness.

"We always talk about how anytime something gets into the Gulf, things can change quickly, and this is a perfect example of that," Steele said.

Residents of Baton Rouge, Louisiana's capital, began forming long lines as people filled gas tanks and stocked up on groceries. Others filled sandbags at city-operated locations to protect homes from possible flooding.

"It's crucial that all of us take this storm very seriously and begin our preparations immediately," Baton Rouge Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome said, urging residents to stock up on three days of food, water and essentials.

A mandatory evacuation was ordered for seven remote coastal communities by the Cameron Parish Office of Homeland Security & Emergency Preparedness. They include Holly Beach, a laid-back stretch dubbed Louisiana's "Cajun Riviera," where many homes sit on stilts. The storm-battered town has been a low-cost paradise for oil industry workers, families and retirees, rebuilt multiple times after past hurricanes.

In Grand Isle, Louisiana's last inhabited barrier island, Mayor David Camardelle recommended residents evacuate and ordered a mandatory evacuation for those in recreational vehicles. Hurricane Ida decimated the city three years ago, destroying 700 homes.

Officials warn that flooding, along with high winds and power outages, is likely in the area beginning Tuesday afternoon through Thursday.

In New Orleans, Mayor LaToya Cantrell urged residents to prepare to shelter in place. "Now is the time to finalize your storm plans and prepare, not only for your families but looking out for your neighbors," she said.

City officials said they were expecting up to 6 inches (15 centimeters) inches of rain, gusty winds and "isolated tornado activity" with the most intense weather likely to reach New Orleans on Wednesday and Thursday.

The hurricane center said Francine was last about 125 miles (205 kilometers) south-southeast of the mouth of the Rio Grande, and about 425 miles (690 kilometers) south-southwest of Cameron, with top sustained winds of about 65 miles per hour (100 kilometers per hour). It was moving north-northwest at 5 mph (7 kph).

As rain fell Monday in northern Mexico, more than a dozen neighborhoods in Matamoros — across the border from Brownsville, Texas — flooded, forcing schools to close Monday and Tuesday. Marco Antonio Hernandez Acosta, manager of the Matamoros Water and Drainage Board, said they were waiting for

Mexico's federal government to provide pumps to drain affected areas.

The storm was expected to move in north-northeast motion through Monday evening and then accelerate to the northeast beginning Tuesday before nearing the upper Texas and Louisiana coastlines Wednesday.

The 49ers spoil Aaron Rodgers' return with a 32-19 win over the Jets

By JOSH DUBOW AP Pro Football Writer

SANTA CLARA, Calif. (AP) — Fill-in back Jordan Mason took top billing in a game hyped as Aaron Rodgers' return.

Mason ran for 147 yards and a touchdown in place of the injured Christian McCaffrey and the 49ers spoiled Rodgers' comeback game with a 32-19 victory over the New York Jets on Monday night.

The former undrafted free agent overpowered New York's highly acclaimed defense with his physical running style, helping the Niners score on eight straight drives.

"I thought he runs like he always does," coach Kyle Shanahan said. "When you get him the ball, he breaks tackles, usually gets more than we block for. When we had the good lanes, he always hit them and got a bunch. But, JP was awesome today."

Rodgers threw for 167 yards and one TD and also had an interception exactly 52 weeks to the day after his debut with New York ended with a torn Achilles after four snaps.

Rodgers had problems moving around in the pocket but still showed off the arm that helped him win four MVPs with the Green Bay Packers a few times in his first real action for the Jets.

"I can play better," Rodgers said. "I missed a couple of throws. ... I felt overall I got the ball out pretty good but there were some opportunities I'd like to have back."

Mason made the most of his opportunities in his first career start. He had just 83 carries his first two seasons but took advantage of being one of the few healthy backs for the Niners this summer to earn a larger role with McCaffrey's sore calf and Achilles still bothering him.

His 28 carries were the most for any Niners player in a regular season game in 13 years as he showed he can handle a full-time load.

"I'm really excited for him," quarterback Brock Purdy said. "He's earned it. He's the kind of guy where it's not given to him. To see him go out and do what he did tonight, I'm so happy for him."

Deebo Samuel added a 2-yard TD run and Jake Moody made a franchise record-tying six field goals to lead the 49ers to the win.

Purdy threw for 231 yards with no touchdowns or turnovers against a Jets defense that generated little pressure without holdout edge rusher Haason Reddick.

The Niners took control of the game around halftime. They got a field goal on a 12-play, 75-yard drive at the end of the first half and scored on Mason's 5-yard run on an 11-play, 70-yarder to start the second half. That turned a 13-7 lead into a 23-7 advantage with the Jets getting only one kneel down snap during that stretch.

"That's a championship outfit, and they introduced us to some championship football," Jets coach Robert Saleh said.

Rodgers then threw an interception on the next drive on a pass to Garrett Wilson that was deflected by Deommodore Lenoir into the hands of linebacker Demetrius Flannigan-Fowles.

Rodgers threw his first TD pass in 610 days when he took advantage of a free play when Leonard Floyd jumped offsides to connect on a 36-yard scoring strike to Allen Lazard that cut the deficit to 26-13. Lazard caught a second TD in the closing seconds from Tyrod Taylor after the game had already been decided.

"We expect greatness when we step on the field," Rodgers said. "There were moments, moments that felt pretty good but not sustained. I felt like if we could just get a first down we'd be rolling. But we had those three and outs which hurt us. I think a lot of stuff is correctable."

Rodgers' second game with the Jets lasted much longer than his first, which ended with a season-ending

Achilles injury after just four snaps in 2023.

New York went three-and-out on the opening drive this game with two handoffs and a dropped pass by Lazard before a setback on the fourth snap that was temporary instead of season ending this time around. Rodgers' first completion as a Jet was caught by Breece Hall, who had the ball punched out by Fred Warner for a lost fumble that set up a Niners field goal.

Rodgers got the Jets moving on the following drive, converting three third-down passes to Wilson to set up Hall's 3-yard TD run. Rodgers went 6 for 7 for 61 yards on the drive.

New York didn't get another first down in the half and trailed 16-7 at the break.

Injuries

Jets: CB Michael Carter left with an ankle injury.

49ers: McCaffrey was inactive after being listed as questionable because of injuries to his calf and Achilles. ... LG Aaron Banks left in the third quarter with a calf injury.

Up next

Jets: Visit Tennessee on Sunday.

49ers: Visit Minnesota on Sunday.

Harris and Trump offer worlds-apart contrasts on top issues in presidential race

By JOSH BOAK, JILL COLVIN and SEUNG MIN KIM Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — This year's presidential race is a genuine contest of ideas between Vice President Kamala Harris and former President Donald Trump — with clear differences on taxes, abortion, immigration, global alliances, climate change and democracy itself.

Since replacing President Joe Biden as the Democratic nominee, Harris has pledged to chart a new way forward even as she has embraced many of his ideas. She wants middle class tax cuts, tax hikes on the wealthy and corporations, a restoration of abortion rights and a government that aggressively addresses climate change, among other stances.

Seeking a return to the White House, Trump wants to accomplish much of what he couldn't do during a term that was sidetracked by the global pandemic. The Republican wants the extension and expansion of his 2017 tax cuts, a massive increase in tariffs, more support for fossil fuels and a greater concentration of government power in the White House.

The two candidates have spelled out their ideas in speeches, advertisements and other venues. Many of their proposals lack specifics, making it difficult to judge exactly how they would translate their intentions into law or pay for them. While the candidates agree on not taxing workers' tips, the outcome in November could drastically change the tax code, America's support for Ukraine, abortion access and the commitments made to limit the damage caused by climate change.

Here's where each candidate stands on 10 top issues:

Abortion

HARRIS: The vice president has called on Congress to pass legislation guaranteeing in federal law abortion access, a right that stood for nearly 50 years before being overturned by the Supreme Court. Like Biden, Harris has criticized bans on abortion in Republican-controlled states and promised as president to block any potential nationwide ban should one clear a future GOP-run Congress. Harris was the Democrats' most visible champion of abortion rights even while Biden was still in the race. She has promoted the administration's efforts short of federal law — including steps to protect women who travel to access the procedure and limit how law enforcement collects medical records.

TRUMP: The former president often brags about appointing the Supreme Court justices who overturned Roe v. Wade. After dodging questions about when in pregnancy he believes the procedure should be restricted, Trump announced last spring that decisions on access and cutoffs should be left to the states. He has said he would not sign a national abortion ban into law if one landed on his desk and recently said he would not try to block access to abortion medication. He told Time magazine that it should also be left

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up to states to determine whether to prosecute women for abortions or to monitor their pregnancies. He has also said that, if he wins, he wants to make IVF treatment free for women.

Climate/Energy

HARRIS: As a senator from California, the vice president was an early sponsor of the Green New Deal, a sweeping series of proposals meant to swiftly move the U.S. to fully green energy that is championed by the Democratic Party's most progressive wing. Harris also said during her short-lived 2020 presidential campaign that she opposed offshore drilling for oil and hydraulic fracturing. But during her three and a half years as vice president, Harris has adopted more moderate positions, focusing instead on implementing the climate provisions of the Biden administration's Inflation Reduction Act. That provided nearly \$375 billion for things like financial incentives for electric cars and clean energy projects. The Biden administration has also enlisted more than 20,000 young people in a national "Climate Corps," a Peace Corps-like program to promote conservation through tasks such as weatherizing homes and repairing wetlands. Despite that, it's unlikely that the U.S. will be on track to meet Biden's goal of cutting greenhouse gas emissions in half by 2030 — a benchmark that Harris hasn't talked about in the early part of her own White House bid.

TRUMP: His mantra for one of his top policy priorities: "DRILL, BABY, DRILL." Trump, who in the past cast climate change as a "hoax" and harbors a particular disdain for wind power, says it's his goal for the U.S. to have the cheapest energy and electricity in the world and has claimed he can cut prices in half within a year of his potential return to office. He'd increase oil drilling on public lands, offer tax breaks to oil, gas and coal producers, speed the approval of natural gas pipelines, open dozens of new power plants, including nuclear facilities, and roll back the Biden administration's aggressive efforts to get people to switch to electric cars, which he argues have a place but shouldn't be forced on consumers. He has also pledged to re-exit the Paris Climate Accords, end wind subsidies and eliminate regulations imposed and proposed by the Biden administration targeting energy-inefficient kinds of lightbulbs, stoves, dishwashers and shower heads.

Democracy/Rule of Law

HARRIS: Like Biden, Harris has decried Trump as a threat to the nation's democracy. But, in attacking her opponent, the vice president has leaned more heavily into her personal background as a prosecutor and contrasted that with Trump being found guilty of 34 felony counts in a New York hush money case and in being found liable for fraudulent business practices and sexual abuse in civil court. The vice president has also talked less frequently than Biden did about Trump's denial that he lost the 2020 presidential election and his spurring on the Jan. 6, 2021, assault on the Capitol. When she's interrupted during rallies with supporters' "Lock him up!" chants directed at Trump, Harris responds that the courts can "handle that" and that "our job is to beat him in November."

TRUMP: After refusing to accept his loss to Biden in 2020, Trump hasn't committed to accepting the results this time around. He's repeatedly promised to pardon the Jan. 6 defendants jailed for assaulting police officers and other crimes during the attack on the Capitol, and recently threatened to jail lawyers, election officials, donors and others "involved in unscrupulous behavior" surrounding November's vote, again stoking unfounded fears. He vows to overhaul the Justice Department and FBI "from the ground up," aggrieved by the criminal charges the department has brought against him. He also promises to deploy the National Guard to cities such as Chicago that are struggling with violent crime and in response to protests, and has also vowed to appoint a special prosecutor to go after Biden.

Federal government

HARRIS: Like Biden, Harris has campaigned hard against "Project 2025," a plan authored by leading conservatives to move as swiftly as possible to dramatically remake the federal government and push it to the right if Trump wins back the White House. She is also part of an administration that is already taking steps to make it harder for any mass firings of civil servants to occur. In April, the Office of Personnel Management issued a new rule that would ban federal workers from being reclassified as political appointees or other at-will employees, thus making them easier to dismiss. That was in response to Schedule F, a 2020 executive order from Trump that reclassified tens of thousands of federal workers to make firing

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them easier.

TRUMP: The former president has sought to distance himself from "Project 2025," despite his close ties to many of its key architects. He has nonetheless vowed his own overhaul of the federal bureaucracy, which he has long blamed for blocking his first term agenda, saying: "I will totally obliterate the deep state." The former president plans to reissue the Schedule F order stripping civil service protections. He says he'd then move to fire "rogue bureaucrats," including those who "weaponized our justice system," and the "warmongers and America-Last globalists in the Deep State, the Pentagon, the State Department, and the national security industrial complex." Trump has also pledged to terminate the Education Department and wants to curtail the independence of regulatory agencies like the Federal Communications Commission. As part of his effort to cut government waste and red tape, he has also pledged to eliminate at least 10 federal regulations for every new one imposed.

Immigration

HARRIS: Attempting to defuse a GOP line of political attack, the vice president has talked up her experience as California attorney general, saying she walked drug smuggler tunnels and successfully prosecuted gangs that moved narcotics and people across the border. Early in his term, Biden made Harris his administration's point person on the root causes of migration. Trump and top Republicans now blame Harris for a situation at the U.S.-Mexico border that they say is out of control due to policies that were too lenient. Harris has countered that Trump worsened the situation by killing a bipartisan Senate compromise that would have included tougher asylum standards and hiring more border agents, immigration judges and asylum officers. She said she would bring back that bill and sign that law, saying that Trump "talks the talk, but doesn't walk the walk" on immigration. The vice president has endorsed comprehensive immigration reform, seeking pathways to citizenship for immigrants in the U.S. without legal status, with a faster track for young immigrants living in the country illegally who arrived as children.

TRUMP: The former president promises to mount the largest domestic deportation in U.S. history — an operation that could involve detention camps and the National Guard. He'd bring back policies he put in place during his first term, like the Remain in Mexico program and Title 42, which placed curbs on migrants on public health grounds. And he'd revive and expand the travel ban that originally targeted citizens from seven Muslim-majority countries. After the Oct. 7 Hamas attack on Israel, he pledged new "ideological screening" for immigrants to bar "dangerous lunatics, haters, bigots, and maniacs." He'd also try to deport people who are in the U.S. legally but harbor "jihadist sympathies." He'd seek to end birthright citizenship for people born in the U.S. whose parents are both in the country illegally.

Israel/Gaza

HARRIS: Harris says Israel has a right to defend itself, and she's repeatedly decried Hamas as a terrorist organization. But the vice president might also have helped defuse some backlash from progressives by being more vocal about the need to better protect civilians during fighting in Gaza.

More than 40,900 Palestinians have been killed in the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza, according to the Health Ministry in the Hamas-ruled territory. The ministry does not distinguish between civilians and militants in its count, but says that women and children make up just over half of the dead. Israel says it has killed more than 17,000 militants in the war.

Like Biden, Harris supports a proposed hostage for extended cease-fire deal that aims to bring all remaining hostages and Israeli dead home. Biden and Harris say the deal could lead to a permanent end to the grinding war and they have endorsed a two-state solution, which would have Israel existing alongside an independent Palestinian state.

TRUMP: The former president has expressed support for Israel's efforts to "destroy" Hamas, but he's also been critical of some of Israel's tactics. He says the country must finish the job quickly and get back to peace. He has called for more aggressive responses to pro-Palestinian protests at college campuses and applauded police efforts to clear encampments. Trump also proposes to revoke the student visas of those who espouse antisemitic or anti-American views and deport those who support Hamas.

LGBTQ+ issues

HARRIS: During her rallies, Harris accuses Trump and his party of seeking to roll back a long list of

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freedoms including the ability “to love who you love openly and with pride.” She leads audiences in chants of “We’re not going back.” While her campaign has yet to produce specifics on its plans, she’s been part of a Biden administration that regularly denounces discrimination and attacks against the LGBTQ+ community. Early in Biden’s term, his administration reversed an executive order from Trump that had largely banned transgender people from military service, and his Education Department issued a rule that says Title IX, the 1972 law that was passed to protect women’s rights, also bars discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. That rule was silent on the issue of transgender athletes.

TRUMP: The former president has pledged to keep transgender women out of women’s sports and says he will ask Congress to pass a bill establishing that “only two genders,” as determined at birth, are recognized by the United States. He promises to “defeat the toxic poison of gender ideology.” As part of his crackdown on gender-affirming care, he would declare that any health care provider that participates in the “chemical or physical mutilation of minor youth” no longer meets federal health and safety standards and bar them from receiving federal money. He’d take similarly punitive steps in schools against any teacher or school official who “suggests to a child that they could be trapped in the wrong body.” Trump would support a national prohibition of hormonal or surgical intervention for transgender minors and bar transgender people from military service.

NATO/Ukraine

HARRIS: The vice president has yet to specify how her positions on Russia’s war with Ukraine might differ from Biden’s, other than to praise the president’s efforts to rebuild alliances unraveled by Trump, particularly NATO, a critical bulwark against Russian aggression. The Biden administration has pledged unceasing support for Ukraine against Russia’s invasion. The government has sent tens of billions of dollars in military and other aid to Ukraine, including a tranche of aid that totaled \$61 billion in weapons, ammunition and other assistance that is expected to last through the end of this year. The administration has maintained that continuing U.S. assistance is critical because Russian leader Vladimir Putin will not stop at invading Ukraine. Harris has said previously that it would be foolish to risk global alliances the U.S. has established and decried Putin’s “brutality.”

TRUMP: The former president has repeatedly taken issue with U.S. aid to Ukraine and says he will continue to “fundamentally reevaluate” the mission and purpose of the NATO alliance if he returns to office. He has claimed, without explanation, that he will be able to end the war before his inauguration by bringing both sides to the negotiating table. (His approach seems to hinge on Ukraine giving up at least some of its Russian-occupied territory in exchange for a cease-fire.) On NATO, he has assailed member nations for years for failing to hit agreed-upon military spending targets. Trump drew alarms this year when he said that, as president, he had warned leaders that he would not only refuse to defend nations that don’t hit those targets, but “would encourage” Russia “to do whatever the hell they want” to countries that are “delinquent.”

Tariffs/Trade

HARRIS: The Biden-Harris administration has sought to boost trade with allies in Europe, Asia and North America, while using tariffs and other tools to go after rivals such as China. The Democratic administration kept Trump’s tariffs on China in place, while adding a ban on exporting advanced computer chips to that country and providing incentives to boost U.S. industries. In May, the Biden-Harris administration specifically targeted China with increased tariffs on electric vehicles and steel and aluminum, among other products.

TRUMP: The former president wants a dramatic expansion of tariffs on nearly all imported foreign goods, saying that “we’re going to have 10% to 20% tariffs on foreign countries that have been ripping us off for years.” He’s suggested tariffs as high as 100% on Chinese goods. He treats these taxes as a way to fund other tax cuts, lower the deficit and possibly fund child care — though the tariffs could raise prices for consumers without generating the revenues Trump promises. He would also urge Congress to pass legislation giving the president authority to impose a reciprocal tariff on any country that imposes one on the U.S. Much of his trade agenda has focused on China. Trump has proposed phasing out Chinese imports of essential goods including electronics, steel and pharmaceuticals and wants to ban Chinese companies

from owning U.S. infrastructure in sectors such as energy, technology and farmland.

Taxes

HARRIS: With much of the 2017 tax overhaul expiring at end of next year, Harris is pledging tax cuts for more than 100 million working and middle class households. In addition to preserving some of the expiring cuts, she wants to make permanent a tax credit of as much as \$3,600 per child and offer a special \$6,000 tax credit for new parents. Harris says her administration would expand tax credits for first-time homebuyers and push to build 3 million new housing units in four years, while wiping out taxes on tips and endorsing tax breaks for entrepreneurs. Like Biden, she wants to raise the corporate tax rate to 28% and the corporate minimum tax to 21%. The current corporate rate is 21% and the corporate minimum, raised under the Inflation Reduction Act, is at 15% for companies making more than \$1 billion a year. But Harris would not increase the capital gains tax as much as Biden had proposed on investors with more than \$1 million in income.

TRUMP: The former president has promised to extend and even expand all of the 2017 tax cuts that he signed into law, while also paying down the debt. He has proposed cutting the overall corporate tax rate to 15% from 21% — but only for companies that make their products in the U.S. He would repeal any tax increases signed into law by Biden. He also aims to gut some of the tax breaks that Biden put into law to encourage the development of renewable energy and EVs. Trump has proposed eliminating taxes on tips received by workers — a policy embraced by Harris, who would also raise the minimum wage for tipped workers — as well as eliminating taxes on Social Security benefits. He also wants to lower the cost of housing by opening up federal land to development. Outside analyses suggest that Trump's ideas would do much more to increase budget deficits than what Harris would do, without delivering the growth needed to minimize any additional debt.

Belarusians fleeing repression at home say they face new threats and intimidation abroad

By YURAS KARMANAU Associated Press

TALLINN, Estonia (AP) — More than a half-million Belarusians have fled their country in the past four years as the authoritarian government launched a harsh crackdown on its political opponents. Some of them, however, are discovering that they can't escape intimidation and threats in their new lives abroad.

Dziana Maiseyenko, 28, was detained without warning while crossing the border from Armenia to Georgia, where she had taken refuge from Belarus a year ago to escape what she called "the nightmare at home."

Authorities in Minsk, she was told, had issued an international arrest warrant against her on charges of "organizing mass unrest."

She knows what a return to Belarus will mean: Her father was imprisoned for nearly three years on similar charges. When he was released last year, he was promptly arrested again.

As hard-line President Alexander Lukashenko seeks his seventh term next year to extend his three-decade rule, opposition leaders in exile say he is ramping up the pressure on Belarusians who moved abroad. The aim is to avoid a repeat of the mass protests that broke out around the 2020 election by quashing any opposition support from abroad.

Months of large demonstrations over that widely denounced balloting resulted in more than 65,000 people arrested over the last four years, with many of them severely beaten, according to the Belarusian human rights group Viasna. Its Nobel Peace Prize-winning founder, Ales Bialiatski, is among those imprisoned.

Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, who was Lukashenko's main challenger in 2020 before fleeing to Lithuania the day after the election, says Belarus has launched a systematic campaign against dissidents abroad.

"Ahead of the 2025 campaign, repressions against Belarusians abroad will most likely only intensify as the regime tries to intimidate those who call for increased international sanctions and nonrecognition of Lukashenko's legitimacy," she said in an interview with The Associated Press.

Tsikhanouskaya said her office gets hundreds of requests a month from Belarusians abroad who say

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criminal cases have been opened against them in their homeland, and it is intervening in at least 15 countries where extradition requests have been made. Other emigres complain their identity documents have been invalidated by the government in Minsk or that relatives at home have come under pressure.

Pavel Latushka, a prominent opposition figure in exile in Poland, says he's received threats, which Polish authorities are investigating, and his website came under a cyberattack that he blames on Lukashenko's government.

Belarusian sprinter Krystsina Tsimanouskaya, who sought political asylum in Poland three years ago after the Tokyo Olympics, also said she had received threatening messages in Warsaw.

One said "they would rip my stomach open if I went outside," Tsimanouskaya told AP at the Paris Olympics.

In another, separate instance, she said she noticed "two men were constantly following me" in her neighborhood. "They went outside when I went outside. This was not some kind of coincidence," Tsimanouskaya said, adding that it ended after she reported it to police. At the Paris Games, Polish team officials advised her to keep to the more secure athletes village whenever possible.

Viasna representative Pavel Sapelka said the Belarus KGB is infiltrating the diaspora, organizing surveillance and taking video of large protests abroad, and then initiating hundreds of criminal cases at home.

"Official Minsk has begun sending out extradition requests en masse, and the logic here is very simple -- even if they manage to bring back only a few from abroad, everyone will be scared," he said.

Independent director Andrei Hniot, a Lukashenko critic who made films about the Minsk protests, was arrested last year at Belgrade's airport on an Interpol warrant at the request of Belarusian authorities for alleged tax evasion. A Serbian court in June ordered his extradition, but European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen intervened.

In a letter to the Belarusian opposition office, she said Serbian authorities were told Hniot's case "was politically motivated" and he "would face reprisals" if returned to his homeland.

"The route to Belarus is a direct road to prison," Hniot told AP from Belgrade, where he's under house arrest while awaiting a final ruling.

In August, two anti-Lukashenko activists were deported from Sweden after being refused political asylum. The mother and son who had participated in protests in Belarus were taken by Swedish authorities to the Lithuania-Belarus frontier and handed over to Belarusian border guards. The son was detained at the border.

"Belarusians need European solidarity not in words but in deeds," said Zmitser Vaserman, who represents a Belarusian exile group in Sweden, urging a "European moratorium on the deportation of Belarusian citizens who are persecuted for political reasons."

To protect the interests of Belarusians abroad, the opposition has created "people's embassies" in 24 countries, including in EU member states, the U.K., Canada, Australia and Brazil.

Belarusian authorities responded by declaring these "people's embassies" to be extremist groups; cooperation with them is punishable by up to seven years in prison and confiscation of property. In the spring, authorities carried out a wave of searches and arrests inside Belarus, initiating hundreds of criminal cases at home and abroad.

"Extremist groups have launched information campaigns to discredit our country in the eyes of Western politicians," said Siarhei Kabakovich, spokesman for the Investigative Committee of Belarus. "The pseudo-embassies are trying to damage the national security of Belarus and are carrying out measures to isolate diplomatic missions of the Foreign Ministry system and block any contacts between foreign citizens, organizations and governments with Belarusian diplomats."

In Vilnius, where opposition leader Tsikhanouskaya is based, several Belarusian institutions were attacked this month. Windows were broken at a Belarusian Orthodox church and a center of Belarusian culture, and obscene messages were left near a refugee shelter.

Lithuania's Foreign Ministry in a statement on X condemned "the acts of vandalism against the Belarusian community carried out according to the KGB playbook" and vowed to punish those responsible.

Tsikhanouskaya called for an investigation, blaming "the Lukashenko regime, which is constantly trying to create an atmosphere of fear and hate in Belarusian society."

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Belarus now requires its citizens to renew their passports inside the country. That leaves many exiles in a bind, fearing prosecution if they return home to get new documents.

Of particular concern are children born abroad to parents who cannot return to Belarus to get documents confirming their citizenship, said Anaïs Marin, the U.N. special rapporteur on human rights in Belarus, because "this may lead to loss of proof of citizenship and, potentially, to statelessness."

Many Belarusians returning home have been arrested at the border, said Tsikhanouskaya. Some record video confessions of repentance, which are widely believed to be coerced.

Katsiaryna Mendryk, a student at the University of Warsaw who was arrested in August, said in a subsequent video confession that she "really regrets participating in extremist activities." She goes on trial this month, facing up to seven years in prison.

Maiseyenka, the woman detained at the Georgia-Armenia border, spent five days in limbo before returning safely to the Georgian capital of Tbilisi. Tikhouskaya's office intervened on her behalf, and Armenia decided not to extradite her, she told AP.

Maiseyenka said she was "a lucky exception" but "realized with horror how dangerous it is to be Belarusian."

"Lukashenko is showing that he can hang the fate of any citizen by a thread," she said. "This means that a Belarusian anywhere in the world needs to be prepared for unpleasant surprises."

AP-NORC/USAFacts poll: Republicans are more likely to trust Trump than official election results

By CHRISTINE FERNANDO and LINLEY SANDERS Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — For Christopher Pugh, the 2020 election was a turning point.

He already distrusted the government. But as he watched Fox News coverage in the immediate aftermath of the election and read posts on Twitter, the social media platform now known as X, that distrust grew. He now believes the falsehood that the 2020 election was stolen and trusts few people other than former President Donald Trump to deliver him news about election results.

"I trust Donald Trump, not the government," said the 38-year-old Republican from Gulfport, Mississippi. "That's it."

While most Americans trust government-certified election results at least a "moderate" amount, Republicans are more likely to trust Trump and his campaign, according to a new survey from the Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research and USAFacts. Americans also are heading into the November election with concerns about misinformation. Many have low trust that the information they receive from presidential candidates — particularly Trump, but also Vice President Kamala Harris — is based on factual information.

Trump continues to lie about the outcome of the 2020 election, saying it was rigged against him even after dozens of his court challenges failed, reviews, recounts and audits in battleground states all affirmed President Joe Biden's win, and Trump's own attorney general said there was no evidence of widespread fraud. Despite no evidence of any widespread fraud, a 2023 poll found that most Republicans believe Biden was not legitimately elected president.

As Trump runs as the Republican candidate for the third time, he also is signaling that he can only lose through widespread fraud. Over the weekend he threatened to prosecute those "involved in unscrupulous behavior" this election should he win in November.

"The only way they can beat us is to cheat," Trump said at a Las Vegas rally in June.

The recent findings from the AP-NORC survey show that a significant chunk of Trump's supporters might be more inclined to believe what he says about the upcoming election results than they are to trust government certifications of election results.

About two-thirds of Republicans trust Trump's campaign at least a moderate amount to provide accurate information about the results of the 2024 election, while only about half say the same about the official certifications of results, the survey found. By contrast, about 9 in 10 Democrats trust the government

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certification at least a moderate amount, and an overwhelming majority, 82%, also have at least a moderate amount of trust in Harris and her campaign.

Most Americans — around 7 in 10 — trust the government certifications of election results at least a moderate amount, according to the survey. Majorities also trust national and local TV news networks, as well as local or national newspapers, to provide accurate information about the outcome of this year's presidential election.

Danielle Almeida, a 45-year-old Democrat from Briarcliff Manor, New York, said she trusts government-certified election results and finds it alarming that some Americans don't.

"In order to have a democracy, we have to trust the system and the results of our elections," she said, adding that she thinks Trump "does not care about fact-checking because he believes his supporters don't care, either."

Americans are less likely to trust the campaigns overall — compared to sources such as the government and the media — but they have a higher level of trust in Harris and her campaign than in Trump and his campaign to provide accurate information about the outcome of the election. About half have at least a "moderate" amount of trust in Harris and her campaign. By contrast, about 4 in 10 have at least a moderate amount of trust in Trump and his campaign.

Some Republicans' distrust of election results started far before the 2020 election.

Richard Baum, 60, a conservative independent from Odessa, Texas, said his suspicions began in the 2000 U.S. presidential race between George W. Bush and Al Gore. After Bush won by a slim margin, "hanging chads" became an unlikely symbol of a disputed presidential election as small anomalies common in elections ballooned into major national controversies.

"There was some stuff there that didn't seem right that made a lot of doubts in my mind about if you can trust the government," Baum said.

Baum said he would trust election results only if voting took place on only a single day, early voting and mail-in ballots were banned and photo IDs were required at all polling places.

Many Americans doubt the veracity of both presidential candidates' campaign messages, but skepticism about Trump's campaign is higher, the USAFacts/AP-NORC survey found.

About 6 in 10 Americans believe that Trump's campaign messages are "rarely" or "never" based on factual information, compared to 45% who say that about Harris' campaign messages.

Many Americans also say it's hard to discern fact from fiction when it comes to the candidates. Slightly less than half of Americans say it's "very easy" or "somewhat easy" to find factual information about the candidates and their positions, and only about one-third say it's easy to know if what candidates are saying is true or not.

About 6 in 10 Americans say it's easy for them to understand the difference between fact and opinion when it comes to information about the upcoming presidential election, but only about 4 in 10 say it's easy to know whether information is true or not.

Americans are, however, more confident about factual information related to election logistics: About 7 in 10 Americans say it's easy to find information about how to register to vote, and about 6 in 10 say it's easy to find information about how to cast their ballot.

Michele Martin, a 56-year-old Pennsylvania Democrat, said she is "very concerned" about misinformation from politicians but finds it much easier to access basic voter information.

"It's online. It's mailed to you. It's not hard to find," she said.

About 8 in 10 Americans say that when it comes to getting information about the government, the spread of misinformation is a "major problem." That is essentially unchanged from when the question was asked in 2020.

Lisa Kuda, a 57-year-old Republican from Palm Harbor, Florida, said she gets most of her news from social media and friends. She said she feels alienated from most news sources other than Fox News.

"Misinformation is everywhere," she said. "It's really difficult to find information about candidates."

When Americans see news about the election and want to find out whether it's true, 40% say they turn

to an internet search first. Much smaller shares — around 1 in 10 for each — say they first check cable news, national TV news or social media.

Baum, from Texas, said he finds it difficult to easily access information about candidates because he believes social media platforms “are censoring conservative ideologies.” He also doesn’t trust Google and instead turns to conservative networks and podcasts such as One America News and conservative podcasters to fact-check claims he’s unsure about.

Almeida’s process looks much different. She starts with a Google search and wades through multiple articles from news outlets such as The New York Times and NBC News, making note of any differences. If multiple articles have the same information, she said, she’s more likely to trust it.

“Misinformation is a huge problem,” she said. “You have to take time to do your research.”

Tyreek Hill’s traffic stop shows interactions with police can be about survival for Black men

By AARON MORRISON, ALANIS THAMES and TERRY TANG Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — After his traffic stop in Miami on Sunday, Tyreek Hill said he has received “the talk” about what to do when pulled over by police. He knows to heed the instructions passed down in Black families for generations.

Keep your hands in sight, preferably on the steering wheel. Avoid any sudden movements. Don’t talk back to the officer. And above all, follow instructions without error or delay.

On Sunday, body camera video released Monday shows, the star wide receiver for the Miami Dolphins was ordered out of his vehicle by Miami-Dade Police officers, handcuffed and placed face down on a street outside the team’s stadium. Hill said he was stopped for speeding and reckless driving before the Dolphins’ first game of the season, and his interaction with police captured in a now-viral cellphone video and the body camera footage escalated to the type of incident that often prompts protests and claims of discriminatory policing, with the prone and handcuffed football star detained by three police officers, one on top of Hill with his knee holding the player’s wrists against his lower back.

The video released Monday shows an officer dragging Hill out of his McClaren sports car by his arm and head and then forcing him face first onto the ground after Hill put up the window of his sports car.

The officers handcuffed Hill and one put a knee in the middle of his back.

The words “if we tell you to do something, do it,” can be heard. The officer who pulled Hill from the car jumped behind him and put a bar hold around Hill’s upper chest or neck.

‘It happened so fast’

“It happened so fast that it caught me off guard,” Hill said in a postgame interview on Sunday.

Hill’s traffic stop reflects a national law enforcement survey that shows that “driving while Black” is likelier to include the threat or use of force than it is for other Americans. For many, Hill’s encounter with police drives home a reality that Black men in particular disproportionately experience what he did and, even if the encounter doesn’t end in tragedy, it confirms an ongoing need for the talk.

On Sunday, other Black Dolphins players said they were used to seeing the kind of police conduct that Hill experienced.

Fact of life for Black Americans

“I won’t say it was scary. It’s something I’m used to seeing,” linebacker David Long Jr. said.

Dolphins safety Jevon Holland said it was “not unnatural” to see police conduct the traffic stop that way — including what the footage appeared to show: One officer striking his handcuffed teammate. One of at least three officers involved in detaining Hill was placed on leave pending an internal investigation.

The Miami-Dade Police Department’s top officer, Director Stephanie Daniels, told the Miami Herald on Monday that the decision to place the officer on leave came after a review of the body camera footage, which she later said would not normally be released during an ongoing investigation but was, in this case, to maintain “public trust.”

“Excessive force on a Black man, that’s not uncommon. It’s a very common thing in America,” Holland

said. "So I think that needs to be addressed at a country-wide level."

Dolphins tight end Jonnu Smith, who was at the scene to support Hill, echoed Holland's sentiments.

"Obviously we all see the police brutality that goes on in this country, and when you see your teammate possibly being part of that, you're doing everything in your power to help him," he said.

Doing exactly as you're told is no guarantee against discrimination or excessive use of force, said Andrew Grant-Thomas, co-founder of EmbraceRace, a nonprofit that provides resources for parents and educators.

Furthermore, he said, perfectly, subserviently obeying law-enforcement commands "shouldn't be the standard for any of us in dealing with police," said Grant-Thomas, who is Black. "There are things like rights."

Treading carefully around police

Still, it often feels like white parents can talk to their children about how to maintain their rights with the police, he said, but for Black kids, it's not about rights but "about survival."

Just like Hill, Grant-Thomas was taught at a young age to tread carefully when it comes to police.

"I'm not going to talk back, I'm going to put my hands at 10 and two o'clock and all those things because the reality is that this person can kill me. It doesn't matter then whether my rights were observed," he said.

Less than a quarter of Americans age 16 and older reported having any contact with police, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics' most recent police-public contact survey. In its special report released in 2022, Black people and Hispanic people were more likely than white people to experience the threat or use of force in 2020. Black people were also more likely to be shouted at by police than white people.

As for drivers, Black people were more likely than white people to experience no enforcement action during their most recent traffic stop, according to the survey results. But among those who did experience an enforcement action, white drivers were more likely to be let off with a warning than drivers of any other race or Hispanic origin.

Hill's end-zone victory dance on Sunday that included mimicking being cuffed made many people feel validated in their opinion that the wide receiver had been wronged.

Grant-Thomas noticed how quickly people used Hill's past allegations of violence to justify any excessive use of force.

"What's astonishing to me — although it shouldn't be — is how many people immediately began to speculate in ways that were really in terms that were unfavorable to him," Grant-Thomas said. "Because of who he was or who they supposed him to be, that for many people seems to justify the police treatment in a way that actually doesn't make any sense."

Police and NFL players

Police brutality in the spotlight, as it concerns NFL players, is far from new. Many Black players have used their platforms, on and off the field, to draw attention to racial disparities in law enforcement.

In 2014, five St. Louis Rams players stood with their arms raised in an apparent show of solidarity with protesters in Ferguson, Missouri, before trotting onto the field for pregame introductions. The "hands up, don't shoot" gesture referred to a debunked claim that Michael Brown, a Black teenager, had his hands raised in surrender when he was shot by a white officer.

And perhaps the most famous on-field anti-brutality gesture was sparked by former San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick, who took a knee during the national anthem, in the wake of fatal police shootings in 2016.

"Unless there's a conversation actually about this, if it's simply floating out there and people are talking in their echo chambers," Grant-Thomas said. "I think the point really will have been lost."

The Harris-Trump debate becomes the 2024 election's latest landmark event

By MICHELLE L. PRICE and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Kamala Harris and Donald Trump will meet for the first time face-to-face Tuesday night for perhaps their only debate, a high-pressure opportunity to showcase their starkly different visions for the country after a tumultuous campaign summer.

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The event, at 9 p.m. Eastern in Philadelphia, will offer Americans their most detailed look at a campaign that's dramatically changed since the last debate in June. In rapid fashion, President Joe Biden bowed out of the race after his disastrous performance, Trump survived an assassination attempt and both sides chose their running mates.

Harris is intent on demonstrating that she can press the Democratic case against Trump better than Biden did. Trump, in turn, is trying to paint the vice president as an out-of-touch liberal while trying to win over voters skeptical he should return to the White House.

Trump, 78, has struggled to adapt to Harris, 59, who is the first woman, Black person and person of South Asian descent to serve as vice president. The Republican former president has at times resorted to invoking racial and gender stereotypes, frustrating allies who want Trump to focus instead on policy differences with Harris.

The vice president, for her part, will try to claim a share of credit for the Biden administration's accomplishments while also addressing its low moments and explaining her shifts away from more liberal positions she took in the past.

The debate will subject Harris, who has sat for only a single formal interview in the past six weeks, to a rare moment of sustained questioning.

"If she performs great, it's going to be a nice surprise for the Democrats and they'll rejoice," said Ari Fleischer, a Republican communications strategist and former press secretary to President George W. Bush. "If she flops, like Joe Biden did, it could break this race wide open. So there's more riding on it."

Tim Hogan, who led Sen. Amy Klobuchar's debate preparations in the 2020 Democratic presidential primaries, said Harris, a former California attorney general, would bring a "prosecutor's instincts to the debate stage."

"That is a very strong quality in that setting: having someone who knows how to land a punch and how to translate it," Hogan said.

The first early ballots of the presidential race will go out just hours after the debate, hosted by ABC News. Absentee ballots are set to be sent out beginning Wednesday in Alabama.

Trump plans to hit Harris as too liberal

Trump and his campaign have spotlighted far-left positions she took during her failed 2020 presidential bid. He's been assisted in his informal debate prep sessions by Tulsi Gabbard, the former Democratic congresswoman and presidential candidate who tore into Harris during their primary debates.

Harris has sought to defend her shifts away from liberal causes to more moderate stances on fracking, expanding Medicare for all and mandatory gun buyback programs — and even backing away from her position that plastic straws should be banned — as pragmatism, insisting that her "values remain the same." Her campaign on Monday published a page on its website listing her positions on key issues.

The former president has argued a Harris presidency is a threat to the safety of the country, highlighting that Biden tapped her to address the influx of migrants as the Republican once again makes dark warnings about immigration and those in the country illegally central to his campaign. He has sought to portray a Harris presidency as the continuation of Biden's still-unpopular administration, particularly his economic record, as voters still feel the bite of inflation even as it has cooled in recent months.

Trump's team insist his tone won't be any different facing a female opponent.

"President Trump is going to be himself," senior adviser Jason Miller told reporters during a phone call Monday.

Gabbard, who was also on the call, added that Trump "respects women and doesn't feel the need to be patronizing or to speak to women in any other way than he would speak to a man."

His advisers suggest Harris has a tendency to express herself in a "word salad" of meaningless phrases, prompting Trump to say last week that his debate strategy was to "let her talk."

The former president frequently plows into rambling remarks that detour from his policy points. He regularly makes false claims about the last election, attacks a lengthy list of enemies and opponents working against him, offers praise for foreign strongmen and comments about race, like his false claim in July that

Harris recently "happened to turn Black."

Harris wants to argue Trump is unstable and unfit

The vice president, who has been the Biden administration's most outspoken supporter of abortion access after the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* in 2022, is expected to focus on calling out Trump's inconsistencies around women's reproductive care, including his announcement that he will vote to protect Florida's six-week abortion ban in a statewide referendum this fall.

Harris was also set to try to portray herself as a steadier hand to lead the nation and safeguard its alliances, as war rages in Ukraine more than two years after Russia's invasion and Israel's war with Hamas in Gaza drags on with no end in sight.

She is likely to warn that Trump presents a threat to democracy, from his attempts in 2020 to overturn his loss in the presidential election, spurring his angry supporters to attack the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, through comments he made as recently as last weekend. Trump on social media issued yet another message of retribution, threatening that if he wins he will jail "those involved in unscrupulous behavior," including lawyers, political operatives, donors, voters and election officials.

Harris has spent the better part of the last five days ensconced in debate preparations in Pennsylvania, where she participated in hours-long mock sessions with a Trump stand-in. Ahead of the debate, she told radio host Rickey Smiley that she was workshopping how to respond if Trump lies.

"There's no floor for him in terms of how low he will go," she said.

Most students in a Georgia school district hit by a shooting will return to class Tuesday

By JEFF AMY Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Many students in Georgia's Barrow County are headed back to class Tuesday, six days after a shooting killed two teachers and two students at the school district's Apalachee High School northeast of Atlanta.

While no return date has been set for the 1,900 students at that high school, the 13,000 students in Barrow County's other schools will return, including at the middle school and elementary school that border the Apalachee campus in Winder.

Superintendent Dallas LeDuff, in a video message Sunday, said sheriff's deputies and state troopers will provide extra security when schools reopen Tuesday, with counseling available at all campuses. He said that if students or employees aren't ready to return, they should contact their school's principal for aid.

"We know the days ahead are going to be difficult, and that we have some staff and some students who are not ready to return to school," LeDuff said. "We also believe as a school system that it is our responsibility to provide a safe space for those who are."

Sabrina Masters Reed, a third grade teacher at Holsenback Elementary School, said she attended grief and trauma training on Monday. She said she's not sure how many students will return Tuesday, but said many parents will need their children to return so they can go to work without having to find child care.

Many in the community remain in shock nearly a week after the shootings, said Reed, who leads the county's chapter of the Georgia Association of Educators, the state's second-largest teachers group.

"I know of other coworkers — who are parents — and parents who chose this community because they thought it was safe here," Reed said of the rapidly suburbanizing county of 90,000 people. "The thing is, I think it is a safe place here in Barrow County. It's just a sad fact that these tragedies can happen anywhere in any community in the U.S."

Relatives and friends are mourning the victims, including teachers Richard Aspinwall, 39, and Cristina Irimie, 53, and students Mason Schermerhorn and Christian Angulo, both 14. A memorial service was held Sunday for Aspinwall, while a Romanian Orthodox Church congregation honored Irimie. Her funeral is set for Saturday.

Colt Gray, 14, is charged as an adult with four counts of murder, and District Attorney Brad Smith has said more charges are likely to be filed against him in connection with the wounded. Authorities have also

charged his 54-year-old father, Colin Gray with second degree murder, involuntary manslaughter and cruelty to children. Investigators allege Colin Gray gave his son access to the gun when he knew or should have known that the teen was a danger to himself and others.

Another teacher and eight more students were wounded, with seven of those hit by gunfire. More of the wounded are going home from hospitals. Doug Griffith said his 15-year-old daughter, Natalie Griffith was released from a hospital on Monday after being treated for gunshot wounds to her arm and wrist.

Natalie Griffith is a freshman and a flute player in the band. She was shot in her algebra class.

"She's got an A in algebra, and she's extremely proud of that," Doug Griffith said.

Griffith is one of a number of relatives seeking to raise donations through GoFundMe. He said he wants to make sure his daughter has help, as well as to support other victims.

"I just want to make sure that she has the support that she's going to need because this is uncharted territory," Griffith said.

On Monday the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency and county officials opened a community recovery center in Winder, offering counseling, legal and financial assistance and other services.

FACT FOCUS: A look at false claims and misinformation by Trump and Harris before their first debate

By MELISSA GOLDIN Associated Press

Former President Donald Trump and Vice President Kamala Harris will meet face-to-face for the first time in a highly-anticipated debate Tuesday night. The two presidential candidates describe the state of the country in starkly different terms. Trump often paints a dark picture centered around issues such as immigration and high inflation, while Harris focuses on optimism for the future, promising that "we're not going back."

The first debate of the 2024 election in June — at which President Joe Biden's disastrous performance ultimately forced him from the race — featured multiple false and misleading claims from both candidates and it's likely that Tuesday's match-up will include much of the same.

Here's a look at some of the false and misleading statements made by Trump and Harris during recent appearances.

Abortion remains a top issue

The unprecedented Supreme Court ruling that overturned *Roe v. Wade* more than two years ago has made abortion a key issue in the 2024 election. As a result of the ruling, abortion is now banned at all stages of pregnancy, with limited exceptions, in 14 Republican-controlled states. It's barred after about the first six weeks, which is before many know they are pregnant, in three other states.

Trump often tries to portray Democrats as radical on abortion. He has falsely claimed on multiple occasions, including the debate in June, that some states allow women to get an abortion after their baby is born. This is not true. Infanticide is criminalized in every state, and no state has passed a law that allows killing a baby after birth.

During her speech accepting the Democratic nomination for president, Harris said Trump would "enact a nationwide abortion ban with or without Congress." Trump said in an Aug. 22 appearance on "Fox & Friends": "I would never. There will not be a federal ban. This is now back in the states where it belongs." However, as recently as March he suggested he'd support a national ban on abortion around 15 weeks of pregnancy.

Blame for the Afghanistan withdrawal

Trump has repeatedly tried to link Harris to the disastrous U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan, which saw the Taliban take over the country again before the last American troops even flew out of the Kabul airport in August 2021.

Most assessments have concluded that Trump and Biden share blame for the disastrous end to America's longest war. The main U.S. government watchdog for the war points to Trump's 2020 deal with the Taliban

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to withdraw all U.S. forces and military contractors as “the single most important factor” in the collapse of U.S.-allied Afghan security forces and the Taliban takeover.

Biden’s April 2021 announcement that he would proceed with the withdrawal set in motion by Trump was the second-biggest factor, the watchdog said. Harris has said she was the last person in the room when Biden made his decision, but neither watchdog reviews nor a more than 18-month investigation by House Republicans have identified any instance where the vice president had a significant impact on decision-making.

A suicide bombing at Kabul’s airport during the withdrawal killed 13 service members and more than 170 Afghans.

Differing views on the economy

Voters rank the economy and inflation as major concerns going into the election, with both Trump and Harris making a case for how they’re better for the country’s wallet.

Democrats, including Harris, have claimed that Trump’s proposal to impose a tariff of 10% to 20% on all imports — and up to 60% on imports from China — would cost the average family \$3,900 a year. Most economists do expect it would raise prices on many goods. The \$3,900 figure comes from the Center for American Progress, a progressive advocacy group. However, Trump has said the tariff revenue could be used to cut other taxes, which would reduce the overall cost of the policy.

One of Harris’ major policy proposals would provide \$25,000 in down payment assistance to certain first-time homebuyers and tax incentives to builders of starter homes. Experts say these promises could end up working at cross-purposes, as help with down payment assistance would almost certainly increase demand when estimates of the U.S. housing shortage already range from 3 million to 7 million homes.

Trump consistently touts the economy under his administration as the best in the country’s history, highlighting high levels of inflation under Biden.

But it’s inaccurate to claim that the economy was at its best under Trump. First, the COVID-19 pandemic triggered a massive recession during his presidency. If issues caused by the pandemic are removed, economic growth averaged 2.67% during Trump’s first three years. That’s pretty solid, but nowhere near the 4% average under Bill Clinton from 1993 to 2001, according to the Bureau of Economic Analysis.

And while inflation peaked at 9.1% in June 2022 after rising steadily in the first 17 months of Biden’s presidency from a low of 0.1% in May 2020, it’s now seeing a downward trend. The most recent data shows that as of July it had fallen to 2.9%, with year-over-year inflation at its lowest level in more than three years.

Energy, inflation and a flip-flop on fracking

Trump has long promised to “drill, baby, drill,” in order to ramp up oil production and bring down inflation. But oil production in the U.S. hit an all-time high under Biden’s administration and inflation is already on the way down. Moreover, gas prices are declining across the U.S. The average cost of regular gas was \$3.27 on Monday, down significantly from a high of \$5.01 in June 2022, according to the American Automobile Association.

Trump recently claimed that all coal-fired power plants will be forced to close in the next few years due to a rule issued in April by the Environmental Protection Agency. But that’s false. Coal-fired power plants will be forced to capture 90% of smokestack emissions by 2032 or shut down. Plants already closing are doing so largely because of economic reasons — they cannot compete with natural gas, solar and wind.

Harris’ shifting views on fracking have been put under the microscope in recent weeks. The vice president said at a Democratic presidential town hall in 2019, during her short-lived 2020 presidential campaign, that she opposed fracking. But her current campaign clarified that she no longer supports a ban on the practice.

During her first sit-down interview since she announced her 2024 candidacy, Harris said she made her position to not ban fracking “clear on the debate stage in 2020” when she faced off with then-Vice President Mike Pence. A review of the debate found she said, “Joe Biden will not end fracking.”

Violent crime rates under Trump and Biden-Harris

Democrats have pointed to high violent crime rates under Trump as the former president — who was convicted on 34 charges in a scheme to illegally influence the 2016 election — calls for law and order,

claiming that violent crime has flourished during the Biden administration.

Violent crime decreased throughout most of Trump's presidency, according to FBI data that uses information provided by law enforcement agencies. However, it spiked in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It has trended downward since 2020 across the U.S., nearing pre-pandemic levels in 2022. Preliminary FBI data for 2023 shows that violent crime overall was down another 6% that year.

The Department of Justice's most recent National Crime Victimization Survey, on the other hand, found that violent crime both reported and not reported to police rose from 2021 to 2022 by 42.4% for people age 12 or older. Unlike the FBI statistics, which cover victims of all ages, the survey uses self-reported data and does not include murders.

Continued attacks on border security

Trump is expected to once again attack Harris on border security. He claimed in a press conference last month that 20 million people, perhaps more, have come across the U.S.-Mexico border during the current administration. But that number is unsubstantiated at best.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection reported 7.1 million arrests for illegal crossings from Mexico from January 2021 through June 2024. That's arrests, not people. Under pandemic-era asylum restrictions, many people crossed more than once until they succeeded because there were no legal consequences for getting turned back. So the number of people is lower than the number of arrests.

Including the number of times migrants were stopped at official land crossings, as well as migrants from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua and Venezuela who were admitted to the country under presidential authority, the number of encounters rises to 8.7 million. CBP does not publish its estimates of people who eluded capture.

Allegations that illegal immigration has caused a spike in violent crime are also unfounded. A number of heinous and high-profile crimes involving people in the U.S. illegally have been in the news in recent months, but there is nothing to support the claim that it is widespread. FBI statistics do not separate out crimes by the immigration status of the assailant, and there is no evidence of a spike in crime perpetrated by migrants, either along the U.S.-Mexico border or in cities seeing the greatest influx of migrants, like New York.

During Brazil's worst drought, wildfires rage and the Amazon River falls to a record low

By FABIANO MAISONNAVE Associated Press

BRASILIA, Brazil (AP) — Brazil is enduring its worst drought since nationwide measurements began over seven decades ago, with 59% of the country under stress — an area roughly half the size of the U.S.

Major Amazon basin rivers are registering historic lows, and uncontrolled manmade wildfires have ravaged protected areas and spread smoke over a vast expanse, plummeting air quality.

"This is the first time that a drought has covered all the way from the North to the country's Southeast," Ana Paula Cunha, a researcher at the National Center for Monitoring and Early Warning of Natural Disasters, said in a statement Thursday. "It is the most intense and widespread drought in history."

Smoke on Monday afternoon caused Sao Paulo, a metropolitan area of 21 million people, to breathe the second most polluted air in the world after Lahore, Pakistan, according to data gathered by IQAir, a Swiss air technology company.

About 1,100 kilometers (683 miles) to the north, a wildfire is sweeping through Chapada dos Veadeiros National Park, one of Brazil's most famous tourism sites.

"This year, the dry season started much earlier than in previous years, whereas the rain season was intense yet short," Nayara Stacheski, head of the park, told The Associated Press. "The wind is strong, the air humidity is very low and it's extremely hot. All this worsens the wildfire."

On Monday, there was one uncontrolled wildfire in a remote area. A helicopter was expected to arrive to transport firefighters. Another fire was controlled by 80 firefighters, with support from two aircraft. Two other fires were threatening to enter the park.

The blazes in one of the few protected areas of Cerrado, the Brazilian savanna, are just the latest drama

in the country beset by months of blazes. From the beginning of the year until Sept. 8, Brazil registered almost 160,000 fires, the worst year since 2010. In Pantanal, the world's largest wetland area, it has been the second worst fire year on record.

Most fires are manmade as part of the deforestation process or for clearing pastures and agricultural land. So far this year, an area the size of Italy has burned in Brazil.

Fire is not the only problem. More than 1,900 kilometers (1,200 miles) from Chapada dos Veadeiros to the Northeast, the Amazon — the world's most voluminous river — and one of its main tributaries, the Madeira River, have registered new daily record lows at the city of Tabatinga. There's no end sight — significant rain is not expected until October.

Low river levels have stranded dozens of communities only accessible by water. One of the largest is Fidadelfia, inhabited by 387 families of the Tikuna tribe. Due to the drought, there is shortage of potable water and children are drinking dirty water, leading to a surge in illnesses. Food is becoming scarce as crops die and it's increasingly difficult to travel to the city, local leader Myrian Tikuna told the AP.

Tikuna sent a selfie taken Monday in her community. Instead of water, endless banks of sand dominate the landscape.

"This used to be the Amazon River," she said. "Now it's a desert. If things get worse, our people will disappear. Now we are realizing the severity of climate change."

This Brazilian dog is a footvolley star. He teaches beachgoers how to play their own game

By DAVID BILLER Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP) — Rio de Janeiro's main beaches bustle with commotion on sunny weekends. But activity ground to a near standstill on one stretch of sand. People held up their phones to record athletic feats they'd never before witnessed, or even imagined.

The game? Footvolley, a combination of soccer and beach volleyball. The athlete? A 3-year-old border collie named Floki.

Floki sparks wonder among bystanders, because he hangs tough in a game that even humans struggle to get a handle on. Footvolley rules are essentially the same as beach volleyball, but with a slightly lower net and, like soccer, players are forbidden from using hands and arms. Floki springs up from the sand to drive the ball with his mouth. He has become something of an internet sensation in Brazil, with hundreds of thousands of followers on Instagram and TikTok.

Floki's owner, Gustavo Rodrigues, is a footvolley coach, but swears he didn't plan this. He had wanted an American Bully, a decidedly less sprightly breed. Floki came into Rodrigues' life instead and quickly revealed his potential when, at just 2 months old, he started jumping after birthday balloons.

Rodrigues started Floki out on what's called "altinha," where a group standing in a circle juggles a soccer ball for as long as possible. In 2023, Floki made his debut in the much more complex, competitive game of footvolley — a hobby enjoyed by some Brazilian soccer stars after they retire, including World Cup winners Ronaldinho and Romário.

Footvolley players need poise, agility, coordination, timing, finesse. Covering one side of the court between just two people means quick sprints back and forth on soft sand under the baking sun. It's no mean feat, but Floki was a natural. A star was born.

"He does things that even some professionals don't — like positioning on the court," said Rodrigues, 26. "Sometimes the ball goes from one side (of the court) to the other, and he doesn't keep his back turned to it. He turns toward the ball to always hit it straight on."

It's clear this high-energy pup lives for this game. Even resting under the shade of the beach's caipirinha bar, he was laser-focused on the action of the adjacent court's match.

When playing, he barks at Rodrigues to pass him the ball and seems to at least understand the basic rules. At times, rather than passing back to Rodrigues for the third and final touch their opponents expect, he sneaks the ball over the net himself to score a point. Then he jumps into Rodrigues' arms to celebrate.

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One of the awestruck onlookers Sunday was Luiza Chioli, who had traveled to Rio from Sao Paulo. She already knew the famous Floki from TikTok, but hadn't expected front-row seats to watch him while sipping her gin and tonic.

"Seeing social media, we had thought it was just cuts, that they used the best takes," said Chioli, 21. "But we saw he played, performed the whole time, did really well. It's really cool."

As Floki's follower count has grown, partnerships and endorsement deals have come rolling in. Rodrigues and Floki live in the inland capital Brasilia, but often travel to Rio — footvolley's mecca — and other Brazilian states to show off his skills, do marketing appearances and create monetized social media content.

His Sunday began with almost an hour playing beside former footvolley champion Natalia Gutler, who's been called Queen of the Beach. Between attempts to film her doing a trick pass to him, he scampered for drinks of water or to dip in the ocean. By the end, both she and Floki were scrambling for shade.

"We're dead," she said as she collapsed onto the sand next to a panting Floki. Someone passed her a phone to check out the best clips for her Instagram, where she has almost 3 million followers.

"Me and my bestie @dog_altinha playing footvolley," she wrote in a later post showing their long rally, and which included her bicycle kicking the ball over the net.

After a rest and another footvolley session, Floki headed to a more remote beach to do a marketing shoot for Farm, a fashion designer that's become the paragon of Rio's breezy tropical style, both in Brazil and abroad.

Then Floki was on Instagram hyping a brand of dog popsicles, gnawing a banana-flavored one himself, and giving an altinha demonstration to mall shoppers. His evening stroll along Copacabana's beachside promenade showed him straining against his leash, still evidently bursting with his boundless energy.

With their weekend marketing blitz in Rio over, Rodrigues and Floki would head back to Brasilia, where their influencer hustle takes a back seat to the hustle of playing competitive matches. They win about one in every three, Rodrigues said, and their opponents are always desperate to avoid being beaten by a dog.

"It generates talk, and people make fun," he said. "No one likes to lose a point to him, so people play their hearts out against us."

Video shows officers dragged Tyreek Hill out of his car after he put his window back up

By TERRY SPENCER and ALANIS THAMES AP Sports Writer

MIAMI GARDENS, Fla. (AP) — A police officer dragged Miami Dolphins wide receiver Tyreek Hill out of his sports car by his arm and head and then forced him face-first onto the ground after Hill put up the window of his car during a traffic stop before Sunday's game, body camera video released Monday shows.

The video showed that the altercation between the Miami-Dade County officers and Hill escalated quickly. The officers cursed at Hill but he did not resist their physical force or strike at them. He did tell one officer, "Don't tell me what to do." Six officers' body camera videos have been released.

Police Director Stephanie Davis said the tape would normally not be released while the investigation is ongoing, but she wanted to demonstrate the department's "commitment to transparency and maintaining public trust."

In a CNN interview later Monday night, the 30-year-old NFL star said he was "embarrassed" and "shell-shocked" by the situation.

Video shows that two motorcycle officers went after Hill after he appeared to speed past them at in his McLaren sports car on the roadway entering Hard Rock Stadium in light traffic — they later said they clocked him at 60 mph (97 kph). They turned on their lights and pulled Hill over. One knocked on the driver's window and told him to put it down, which Hill did and handed him his driver's license.

"Don't knock on my window like that," Hill told the officer repeatedly.

"I have to knock to let you know I am here," the officer told Hill while repeatedly asking why the player didn't have his seatbelt on.

"Just give me my ticket, bro, so I can go. I am going to be late. Do what you gotta do," Hill told the of-

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ficer while putting his darkly tinted window back up.

"Keep your window down," the officer told him, again tapping on the glass. Hill can still be seen inside.

Hill rolled the window down slightly and said, "Don't tell me what to do." He put the window back up.

Hill told CNN's Kaitlan Collins he did roll his window back up, citing concern about drawing unwanted attention to himself.

"If I let my window down, people walking by, driving by, they're going to notice that it's me," Hill said. "And they're going to start taking pictures, and I didn't want to create a scene at all. Like, I just really wanted to get the ticket and then go on about my way."

The officer again told Hill to put his window back down or "I am going to get you out of the car. As a matter of fact, get out of the car."

The officer then demanded Hill open the door. Another officer stepped up and said, "Get out of the car or I will break that ... window," using an obscenity.

The door opened and the second officer reached in and grabbed Hill by the arm and the back of the head as the player said, "I am getting out."

Hill later guessed that he wasn't moving as quickly as the officers would have liked.

"I wasn't moving fast because I've got injuries," said Hill, who started his ninth NFL season. "I got things that I go through. I play a physical sport."

The second officer forced Hill face-first onto the ground. Three officers pulled Hill's arms behind his back as Hill yelled into his cellphone, "I am getting arrested Drew," talking to the Dolphins' director of security, Drew Brooks.

The officers handcuffed Hill and one put a knee in the middle of his back. "If we tell you to do something, do it."

"Take me to jail, brother, do what you gotta do," Hill replied.

"We are," an officer said.

"You crazy," Hill said to the officer.

The officers stood Hill up and walked him to the sidewalk. One officer told him to sit on the curb. Hill said to the officer he just had surgery on his knee.

An officer then jumped behind him and put a bar hold around Hill's upper chest or neck. He pulled Hill into a seating position.

"Chill, bro," Hill told the officers.

At that point, teammate Jonnu Smith parked his SUV in front of Hill's car, got out and asked what was going on. The officers ordered Smith to get back in his vehicle and leave. They then told him they were going to give him a ticket for blocking the road.

Defensive tackle Calais Campbell also pulled up. He was told to leave and when he didn't, he was briefly handcuffed.

Hill and Campbell were eventually released and allowed to go into the stadium. Hill received citations for careless driving and failing to wear a seatbelt, but was never arrested, the video shows. One officer was placed on administrative leave. An internal affairs investigation has been launched.

The Dolphins, in a statement released Monday night said they have a strong relationship with the police department but were "saddened" by the altercation.

"As is on full display in the videos released tonight, there are some officers who mistake their responsibility and commitment to serve with misguided power," the team said. "While we commend MDPD for taking the right and necessary action to quickly release this footage, we also urge them to take equally swift and strong action against the officers who engaged in such despicable behavior."

Steadman Stahl, president of the South Florida Police Benevolent Association, defended the officer's actions, saying in a statement that Hill was not "immediately cooperative" with officers on the scene, that the officers followed their policy in handcuffing Hill, who was "redirected to the ground" after refusing to sit.

Julius B. Collins, Hill's attorney who appeared with him on CNN, said there was one officer who was the "most aggressive" but another who initially approached Hill's car was not aggressive at all. Neither was

Hill, Collins added.

"You saw also, he put up his hands to show that he didn't have a firearm. He wasn't a threat and that he was complying with officers. I mean, you know, as far as this statement goes, though, from the police union, I think the video contradicts everything that they're saying."

Hill, who is Black, said he wondered what would have happened to him if he weren't an NFL star. Some of his teammates who are also Black said they were used to seeing that sort of interaction.

"I hate talking like this, man, because I have a kid fan base," Hill said. "But the reality of it, yeah, it's the truth. If I wasn't Tyreek Hill, worst-case scenario, we would have had a different article — 'Tyreek Hill got shot in front of Hard Rock Stadium.' That's worst-case scenario. Or 'Tyreek Hill put in handcuffs and taken in and booked.'"

This isn't the first off-field incident involving Hill.

He was accused of punching his girlfriend in college and got kicked off the team at Oklahoma State, later pleading guilty to domestic assault and battery by strangulation. In 2019, prosecutors in suburban Kansas City declined to charge Hill after an alleged domestic violence incident involving his fiancée and their 3-year-old child.

Hill said Monday he wants to turn this recent incident into a positive.

"I'm a good ole country boy from South Georgia, man," Hill said. "I'm not a big believer in dividing people."

Trump's rhetoric on elections turns ominous as voting nears in the presidential race

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI Associated Press

With early voting fast approaching, the rhetoric by Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump has turned more ominous with a pledge to prosecute anyone who "cheats" in the election in the same way he believes they did in 2020, when he falsely claimed he won and attacked those who stood by their accurate vote tallies.

He also told a gathering of police officers last Friday that they should "watch for the voter fraud," an apparent attempt to enlist law enforcement that would be legally dubious.

Trump has contended, without providing evidence, that he lost the 2020 election only because of cheating by Democrats, election officials and other, unspecified forces. On Saturday, Trump promised that this year those who cheat "will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law" should he win in November. He said he was referencing everyone from election officials to attorneys, political staffers and donors.

"Those involved in unscrupulous behavior will be sought out, caught, and prosecuted at levels, unfortunately, never seen before in our Country," Trump wrote in the post on his social media network Truth Social that he later also posted on X, the site once known as Twitter.

The former President's warning — he prefaced it with the words "CEASE & DESIST" — is the latest increase in rhetoric that mimics that used by authoritarian leaders.

Election experts and several state and local election officials were quick to condemn the former president's comment, which they viewed in part as an attempt at intimidation as offices are preparing for the start of voting.

Barb Byrum, the clerk of Ingham County, Michigan, said she thinks Trump's post is an attack on democracy aimed at driving election officials out of the profession.

"But I know that we are not going to be bullied," said Byrum, a Democrat. "We are civil servants that signed up to make sure every qualified registered voter has the opportunity to exercise their right to vote, and we will do that."

To be clear, Trump lost the 2020 election to President Joe Biden in both the Electoral College and in the popular vote, where Biden received 7 million more votes. Trump's own attorney general said there was no evidence of widespread fraud, Trump lost dozens of lawsuits challenging the results and an Associated Press investigation showed there was no level of fraud that could have tipped the election. Additionally, multiple reviews, recounts and audits in the battleground states where Trump contested his loss all con-

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firmed Biden's win.

Trump, who has spoken warmly of authoritarians and mused recently that "sometimes you need a strongman," has already pledged to prosecute his political adversaries if he returns to power. His allies have drawn up plans to make federal prosecutors more able to target the president's opponents.

In one possible conservative outline for a new Trump administration known as Project 2025, a former Trump Justice Department official writes that Pennsylvania's top election official should have been prosecuted for a policy dispute — in deciding that voters there have a chance to fix signature errors on their mail ballots.

Trump has disavowed Project 2025, but his rhetoric matches that example, said Justin Levitt, a former Justice Department official and Biden White House staffer who now teaches law at Loyola Marymount in Los Angeles.

"He is increasingly showing us what type of president he hopes to be, and that involves using the Justice Department to punish people he disagrees with — whether they committed crimes or not," Levitt said.

Levitt said he was skeptical that a Trump Justice Department would be able to simply file charges against people who contradicted his election lies, but he and others said the suggestion was dangerous nevertheless.

"Threatening people with punishment for cheating is deeply disturbing if 'cheating' simply means that you don't like the outcome of the election," Steve Simon, a Democrat who is Minnesota's secretary of state and the president of the National Association of Secretaries of State, said in a post on X.

Trump's campaign said the former president was simply talking about the importance of clean elections. "President Trump believes anyone who breaks the law should be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law, including criminals who engage in election fraud. Without free and fair elections, you can't have a country," campaign spokeswoman Karoline Leavitt said in a statement.

Trump already has lodged threats against people who engaged in no apparent illegal activity during the 2020 election. Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg and his wife, Priscilla Chan Zuckerberg, in 2020 donated more than \$400 million to local election offices to help them deal with the pandemic. In a book released earlier this month, Trump threatened that Zuckerberg will "spend the rest of his life in prison" if he makes any more contributions.

Jocelyn Benson, Michigan's Democratic Secretary of State, said in an interview Monday that Trump's comments have prompted election officials, already reeling from years of threats due to Trump's false claims of 2020 corruption, to increase their level of vigilance and security planning.

"That is a level of vitriol and threats that we have not seen before, and it is very alarming and concerning," Benson said. "We worry that individuals will read that rhetoric and take it on themselves to exact the vengeance prior to the election — or immediately following, if their candidate doesn't win — that their candidate has called for."

White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said Monday that Trump's rhetoric was dangerous: "This is not who we are as a country. This is a democracy."

Stephen Richer, the Republican Recorder of Maricopa County, Arizona, who's been repeatedly attacked by Trump and his supporters for standing by the accuracy of that county's 2020 vote count, took to X to point to one election official who has been charged for her actions that year — Tina Peters. The former clerk of Mesa County in Colorado was convicted in August of helping activists access her county's voting machines to try to prove Trump's lies.

"She was on your side of this," Richer wrote to Trump in his post. Earlier this summer, Richer was defeated in the Republican primary in his bid for reelection.

Trump's call for police officers to watch polling stations in case of fraud in November came Friday as he addressed a gathering of the Fraternal Order of Police, an organization that has endorsed him.

"I hope you can watch and you're all over the place. Watch for the voter fraud. Because we win. Without voter fraud, we win so easily," he told the officers. "You can keep it down just by watching. Because believe it or not, they're afraid of that badge. They're afraid of you people."

What he's suggesting could violate several federal and state laws against voter intimidation — some of which specifically prohibit uniformed officers from being at the polls unless they are responding to an emergency or casting a ballot themselves, according to Jonathan Diaz, director of voting advocacy and partnerships at the Campaign Legal Center.

Diaz said those laws emerged from the nation's fraught history of law enforcement officers abusing their power to stop Black people from voting.

"We have to remember that history when we think of the presence of law enforcement at the polls," he said. "Even the best-intentioned officers who are there really just to keep people safe with no ill will, their presence might be perceived by voters in a way that is different than they intended."

Man accused of shooting 5 on Kentucky interstate vowed to 'kill a lot of people,' warrant says

By BRUCE SCHREINER and DYLAN LOVAN Associated Press

LONDON, Ky. (AP) — The man suspected of opening fire on a highway in Kentucky sent a text message vowing to "kill a lot of people" less than 30 minutes before he shot and wounded five people on Interstate 75, authorities said in an arrest warrant.

"I'm going to kill a lot of people. Well try at least," Joseph Couch, 32, wrote in the text message, according to the warrant affidavit filed in court. In a separate text message, Couch wrote, "I'll kill myself afterwards," the affidavit says.

The Lexington Herald-Leader identified the woman Couch sent the text messages to as his ex-wife. The affidavit does not describe the relationship between Couch and the woman who received the texts.

The affidavit, written by Capt. Richard Dalrymple of the Laurel County Sheriff's Office, said that before authorities received the first report of the shooting about 5:30 p.m. Saturday, a dispatcher in Laurel County got a call from a woman who told them Couch had sent her the text messages at 5:03 p.m.

In response to that call, police initiated a tracker on Couch's cellphone but the location wasn't received until 6:53 p.m., the affidavit states, almost 90 minutes after the highway shooting.

The affidavit obtained by The Associated Press charges Couch with five counts each of criminal attempt to commit murder and first-degree assault.

On Sunday, law enforcement officers searched an area near where Couch's vehicle was found, with a view of I-75. There, they found a green Army-style duffel bag, ammunition and numerous spent shell casings, the affidavit says. A short distance away, they found a Colt AR-15 rifle with a sight mounted to the weapon and several additional magazines. The duffel bag had "Couch" hand-written in black marker.

Searchers have been combing thousands of acres in the rugged, hilly area near London, a small city of about 8,000 people about 75 miles (120 kilometers) south of Lexington.

State police Master Trooper Scottie Pennington, a spokesman for the London post, said troopers are being brought in from across the state to aid in the search focused on a remote area about 8 miles (13 kilometers) north of London. He described the extensive search area as "walking in a jungle" with machetes needed to cut through thickets.

"We have cliff beds. We have sinkholes. We have caves," Pennington said Monday. "We have culverts that go under the interstate. We have creeks and rivers and the dense brush."

Authorities vowed to keep up their relentless pursuit in the densely wooded area as local residents worried about where the shooter might turn up next.

"We're not going to quit until we do lay hands on him," Laurel County Sheriff John Root said.

Rebecca Puryear told the Lexington Herald-Leader she's thankful to be alive after she was shot across her chest in her right arm. She was with her husband and 4-year-old son coming home after a meal at Olive Garden.

Another bullet burst into fragments upon hitting the door of her Toyota Camry, injuring her left arm, too.

"I looked at my husband and said, 'What was that?' He said it was gunshots. I said, 'Oh my God!'" Puryear, 28, told the newspaper.

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She was “gushing blood,” but her husband urged her to keep driving. She pulled over a mile up the road and her husband told her to take off her shirt and press it to the wound while he called 911.

Puryear is out of the hospital but will have to have surgery at a later date. .

“This man was out to kill, and he almost did,” Puryear said, adding: “In a blink of an eye you could not be here. I don’t want nobody else’s family to go through this.”

Meanwhile, area school districts were shut down Monday across a wide swath of southeastern Kentucky as the search for Couch stretched into a third day.

Donna Hess, who lives 10 miles (16 kilometers) from the shooting scene agreed with the decision to close schools.

“I’d be afraid he’d try to hijack the bus and take the kids as hostages,” said Hess, who has a first grader and a preschooler. “I’m worried about everybody because they don’t know where he’s at ... We don’t know what he’s capable of right now.”

Couch most recently lived in Woodbine, a small community about 20 miles (32 kilometers) south of the shooting scene. An employee of a gun store in London, Center Target Firearms, informed authorities that Couch purchased an AR-15 and 1,000 rounds of ammunition hours before the shooting, the affidavit said.

Joe Arnold, the gun store’s manager, declined to comment Monday. He said he did not want to interfere with the investigation.

“We’d love for him to be found and prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law,” Arnold told the AP.

Kentucky has few regulations on purchasing guns and carrying them in public. The state’s gun laws “are among the worst in the country” according to a report by Everytown For Gun Safety, a gun safety nonprofit group.

Kentucky legislators repealed a law in 2019 that required a permit for carrying a concealed weapon. The state also does not require a background check at the point of purchase.

Authorities in Kentucky said Monday that Couch was in the Army Reserve and not the National Guard, as officials initially indicated. The U.S. Army said in a statement that Couch served from 2013 to 2019 as a combat engineer. He was a private when he left and had no deployments.

Pennington said Monday that military experience doesn’t make Couch a trained survivalist, while the plan is to wear Couch down.

“How long can you really survive?” Pennington said. “We hope he just walks out.”

Authorities said Couch fired 20 to 30 rounds, striking 12 vehicles on the interstate Saturday.

Christina DiNoto, who witnessed the shooting while driving, said Monday the search weighs heavily on her mind.

“To know that he’s still at large — that makes me nervous, honestly,” DiNoto said.

James Earl Jones, acclaimed actor and voice of Darth Vader, dies at 93

By MARK KENNEDY AP Entertainment Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — James Earl Jones, who overcame racial prejudice and a severe stutter to become a celebrated icon of stage and screen — eventually lending his deep, commanding voice to CNN, “The Lion King” and Darth Vader — has died. He was 93.

His agent, Barry McPherson, confirmed Jones died Monday morning at home in New York’s Hudson Valley region. The cause was not immediately clear.

The pioneering Jones, who in 1965 became one of the first African American actors in a continuing role on a daytime drama (“As the World Turns”) and worked deep into his 80s, won two Emmys, a Golden Globe, two Tony Awards, a Grammy, the National Medal of Arts and the Kennedy Center Honors. He was also given an honorary Oscar and a special Tony for lifetime achievement. In 2022, a Broadway theater was renamed in his honor.

He cut an elegant figure late in life, with a wry sense of humor and a ferocious work habit. In 2015, he arrived at rehearsals for a Broadway run of “The Gin Game” having already memorized the play and with

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notebooks filled with comments from the creative team. He said he was always in service of the work.

"The need to storytell has always been with us," he told The Associated Press then. "I think it first happened around campfires when the man came home and told his family he got the bear, the bear didn't get him."

Jones created such memorable film roles as the reclusive writer coaxed back into the spotlight in "Field of Dreams," the boxer Jack Johnson in the stage and screen hit "The Great White Hope," the writer Alex Haley in "Roots: The Next Generation" and a South African minister in "Cry, the Beloved Country."

He was also a sought-after voice actor, expressing the villainy of Darth Vader ("No, I am your father," commonly misremembered as "Luke, I am your father"), as well as the benign dignity of King Mufasa in both the 1994 and 2019 versions of Disney's "The Lion King" and announcing "This is CNN" during station breaks. He won a 1977 Grammy for his performance on the "Great American Documents" audiobook.

"If you were an actor or aspired to be an actor, if you pounded the pavement in these streets looking for jobs, one of the standards we always had was to be a James Earl Jones," Samuel L. Jackson once said.

Some of his other films include "Dr. Strangelove," "The Greatest" (with Muhammad Ali), "Conan the Barbarian," "Three Fugitives" and playing an admiral in three blockbuster Tom Clancy adaptations — "The Hunt for Red October," "Patriot Games" and "Clear and Present Danger." In a rare romantic comedy, "Claudine," Jones had an onscreen love affair with Diahann Carroll.

LeVar Burton, who starred alongside Jones in the TV movie "Guyana Tragedy: The Story of Jim Jones," paid tribute on X, writing, "There will never be another of his particular combination of graces."

Jones made his Broadway debut in 1958's "Sunrise At Campobello" and would win his two Tony Awards for "The Great White Hope" (1969) and "Fences" (1987). He also was nominated for "On Golden Pond" (2005) and "Gore Vidal's The Best Man" (2012). He was celebrated for his command of Shakespeare and Athol Fugard alike. More recent Broadway appearances include "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof," "Driving Miss Daisy," "The Iceman Cometh," and "You Can't Take It With You."

As a rising stage and television actor, he performed with the New York Shakespeare Festival Theater in "Othello," "Macbeth" and "King Lear" and in off-Broadway plays.

Jones was born by the light of an oil lamp in a shack in Arkabutla, Mississippi, on Jan. 17, 1931. His father, Robert Earl Jones, had deserted his wife before the baby's arrival to pursue life as a boxer and, later, an actor.

When Jones was 6, his mother took him to her parents' farm near Manistee, Michigan. His grandparents adopted the boy and raised him.

"A world ended for me, the safe world of childhood," Jones wrote in his autobiography, "Voices and Silences." "The move from Mississippi to Michigan was supposed to be a glorious event. For me it was a heartbreak, and not long after, I began to stutter."

Too embarrassed to speak, he remained virtually mute for years, communicating with teachers and fellow students with handwritten notes. A sympathetic high school teacher, Donald Crouch, learned that the boy wrote poetry, and demanded that Jones read one of his poems aloud in class. He did so faultlessly.

Teacher and student worked together to restore the boy's normal speech. "I could not get enough of speaking, debating, orating — acting," he recalled in his book.

At the University of Michigan, he failed a pre-med exam and switched to drama, also playing four seasons of basketball. He served in the Army from 1953 to 1955.

In New York, he moved in with his father and enrolled with the American Theater Wing program for young actors. Father and son waxed floors to support themselves while looking for acting jobs.

True stardom came suddenly in 1970 with "The Great White Hope." Howard Sackler's Pulitzer Prize-winning Broadway play depicted the struggles of Jack Johnson, the first Black heavyweight boxing champion, amid the racism of early 20th-century America. In 1972, Jones repeated his role in the movie version and was nominated for an Academy Award as best actor.

Jones' two wives were also actors. He married Julianne Marie Hendricks in 1967. After their divorce, he married Cecilia Hart, best known for her role as Stacey Erickson in the CBS police drama "Paris," in 1982.

(She died in 2016.) They had a son, Flynn Earl, born in 1983.

In 2022, the Cort Theatre on Broadway was renamed after Jones, with a ceremony that included Norm Lewis singing "Go the Distance," Brian Stokes Mitchell singing "Make Them Hear You" and words from Mayor Eric Adams, Samuel L. Jackson and LaTanya Richardson Jackson.

"You can't think of an artist that has served America more," director Kenny Leon told the AP. "It's like it seems like a small act, but it's a huge action. It's something we can look up and see that's tangible."

Citing his stutter as one of the reasons he wasn't a political activist, Jones nonetheless hoped his art could change minds.

"I realized early on, from people like Athol Fugard, that you cannot change anybody's mind, no matter what you do," he told the AP. "As a preacher, as a scholar, you cannot change their mind. But you can change the way they feel."

Hakeem Jeffries rejects GOP spending bill as 'unserious and unacceptable'

By KEVIN FREKING Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Calling it "unserious and unacceptable," House Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries rejected on Monday a proposal from Speaker Mike Johnson that links continued government funding for six months with a measure to require proof of citizenship when registering to vote.

The response frames the spending battle to come over the next weeks as lawmakers work to reach consensus on a short-term spending bill that would prevent a partial government shutdown when the new fiscal year begins Oct. 1. Lawmakers hope to avoid a shutdown just weeks before voters go to the polls.

Johnson is punting the final decisions on full-year spending into next year when a new president and Congress take over. He's doing so at the urging of members within his conference who believe that Republicans will be in a better position next year to secure the funding and policy priorities they want.

But Democrats said the appropriations process should be wrapped up by this Congress, and the short-term measure should reflect that. It also needs to be free of "partisan policy changes," Jeffries said.

"There is no other viable path forward that protects the health, safety and economic well-being of hard-working American taxpayers," Jeffries wrote in a letter to House Democrats released Monday.

Lawmakers are returning to Washington this week following a traditional August recess spent mostly working in their home states and districts. They are not close to completing work on the dozen annual appropriations bills that will fund the agencies during the next fiscal year, so they'll need to approve a stopgap measure.

Johnson's proposal is not only running into resistance from Democrats, but it was clear Monday night that there are also some in the GOP conference who won't vote for any stopgap bill, let alone one they say spends too much. Johnson can afford to lose only four dissenters from within his conference if Democrats are united in opposition.

"We need to stop spending at a level that is untenable for the American people," said Rep. Cory Mills, R-Fla., who also predicted the bill would not have the votes to pass.

The House bill including the proof of citizenship mandate for voter registration complicates the effort. The voter registration measure is popular with House Republicans and has already passed once before in that chamber. The House Freedom Caucus, which generally includes the chamber's most conservative members, called for it to be attached to the spending bill. But Democrats are overwhelmingly opposed.

Republicans say that requiring proof of citizenship would ensure that U.S. elections are only for American citizens, improving confidence in the nation's federal election system, something that former President Donald Trump has sought to undermine over the years.

Opponents say it is already against the law for noncitizens to vote in federal elections and that the document requirements would disenfranchise millions of Americans who do not have the necessary documents readily available when they get a chance to register.

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Trump and other Republicans have revved up their complaints about the issue of noncitizens voting with the influx of migrants across the U.S.-Mexico border under President Joe Biden's administration. They are contending Democrats let them in to add them to the voter rolls. But the available evidence shows that noncitizen voting in federal elections is incredibly rare.

Johnson called the proof of citizenship mandate a "righteous fight" as he entered the Capitol Monday afternoon. He said that even if a small percentage of people who have entered the U.S. illegally end up registering to vote, "they can throw the election. This is serious business."

Senate Democrats have also come out against Johnson's proposal. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer called the bill "pure partisan posturing."

"Speaker Johnson knows deep down that he needs to work with Democrats to get anything done," Schumer said.

The White House said that if the bill reached Biden's desk he will veto it. The veto threat said states already have effective safeguards in place to verify voters' eligibility and maintain accurate voter rolls.

"Instead of working in a bipartisan manner to keep the Government open and provide emergency funding for disaster needs, House Republicans have chosen brinksmanship," the White House statement said.

The bill does provide an additional \$10 billion for a disaster relief fund administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. But the White House said it did not cover the full amount needed through other disaster relief programs, such as for highways and bridges damaged by disasters in 38 states.

Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin warned that long-term continuing resolutions, such as the current one before the House this week, harm military readiness. Austin said in a letter to the chairs and ranking members of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees that, if passed, the bill would mark the second year in a row and the seventh time in the past 15 years that the department is delayed in moving forward with some critical priorities.

"These actions subject Service members and their families to unnecessary stress, empower our adversaries, misalign billions of dollars, damage our readiness, and impede our ability to react to emergent events," Austin wrote.

Louisiana residents brace as Tropical Storm Francine is expected to hit their coast as a hurricane

By SARA CLINE and JAMIE STENGLE Associated Press

BATON ROUGE, La. (AP) — Tropical Storm Francine strengthened Monday in the Gulf of Mexico and was forecast to make landfall as a hurricane this week in Louisiana, where evacuation orders were quickly issued in some coastal communities and residents began filling sandbags in preparation for heavy rains and widespread flooding.

Francine, the sixth named storm of the Atlantic hurricane season, was expected to become a hurricane shortly, the U.S. National Hurricane Center in Miami said Monday night. The storm was already being felt in Mexico, where drenching rains closed schools as the storm gathered strength in the Gulf.

Louisiana Gov. Jeff Landry urged residents "not to panic, but be prepared" and heed evacuation warnings. Forecasters said Francine's landfall in south Louisiana was expected Wednesday afternoon as a Category 2 hurricane with winds of 96 to 110 mph (155-175 kph).

"We do not want people to wait to the last minute to get on the road and then run out of fuel," Landry said. "We put a lot of information throughout the summer, throughout hurricane season, so that people can be prepared. The more prepared we are, the easier it is for us."

Francine is taking aim at a Louisiana coastline that has yet to fully recover since hurricanes Laura and Delta decimated Lake Charles in the region in 2020, followed a year later by Hurricane Ida. Over the weekend, a 22-story building in Lake Charles that had become a symbol of storm destruction was imploded after sitting vacant for nearly four years, its windows shattered and covered in shredded tarps.

Francine's storm surge on the Louisiana coast could reach as much as 10 feet (3 meters) from Cameron to Port Fourchon and into Vermilion Bay, forecasters said.

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"It's a potential for significantly dangerous, life-threatening inundation," said Michael Brennan, director of the hurricane center, adding it could also send "dangerous, damaging winds quite far inland."

He said landfall was likely somewhere between Sabine Pass — on the Texas-Louisiana line — and Morgan City, Louisiana, about 220 miles (350 kilometers) to the east.

Louisiana officials urged residents to immediately prepare while "conditions still allow" for it, Mike Steele, spokesperson for the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness, told The Associated Press. He warned Francine could rapidly intensify.

"We always talk about how anytime something gets into the Gulf, things can change quickly, and this is a perfect example of that," Steele said.

Residents of Baton Rouge, Louisiana's capital, began forming long lines as people filled gas tanks and stocked up on groceries. Others filled sandbags at city-operated locations to protect homes from possible flooding.

"It's crucial that all of us take this storm very seriously and begin our preparations immediately," Baton Rouge Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome said, urging residents to stock up on three days of food, water and essentials.

A mandatory evacuation was ordered for seven remote coastal communities by the Cameron Parish Office of Homeland Security & Emergency Preparedness. They include Holly Beach, a laid-back stretch dubbed Louisiana's "Cajun Riviera," where many homes sit on stilts. The storm-battered town has been a low-cost paradise for oil industry workers, families and retirees, rebuilt multiple times after past hurricanes.

In Grand Isle, Louisiana's last inhabited barrier island, Mayor David Camardelle recommended residents evacuate and ordered a mandatory evacuation for those in recreational vehicles. Hurricane Ida decimated the city three years ago, destroying 700 homes.

Officials warn that flooding, along with high winds and power outages, is likely in the area beginning Tuesday afternoon through Thursday.

In New Orleans, Mayor LaToya Cantrell urged residents to prepare to shelter in place. "Now is the time to finalize your storm plans and prepare, not only for your families but looking out for your neighbors," she said.

City officials said they were expecting up to 6 inches (15 centimeters) inches of rain, gusty winds and "isolated tornado activity" with the most intense weather likely to reach New Orleans on Wednesday and Thursday.

The hurricane center said Francine was last about 145 miles (235 kilometers) south-southeast of the mouth of the Rio Grande, and about 425 miles (690 kilometers) south-southwest of Cameron, with top sustained winds of about 65 miles per hour (100 kilometers per hour). It was moving north-northwest at 7 mph (11 kph).

As rain fell Monday in northern Mexico, more than a dozen neighborhoods in Matamoros — across the border from Brownsville, Texas — flooded, forcing schools to close Monday and Tuesday. Marco Antonio Hernandez Acosta, manager of the Matamoros Water and Drainage Board, said they were waiting for Mexico's federal government to provide pumps to drain affected areas.

The storm was expected to move in north-northeast motion through Monday evening and then accelerate to the northeast beginning Tuesday before nearing the upper Texas and Louisiana coastlines Wednesday.

The iPhone 16, new AirPods and other highlights from Apple's product showcase

CUPERTINO, Calif. (AP) — Apple squarely shifted its focus toward artificial intelligence with the unveiling of its hotly anticipated iPhone 16 along with a slew of new features coming with the next update to the device's operating system. While the new phone lineup headlined Monday's showcase, the tech giant also shared updates to its smartwatch and AirPods lineups.

Here are all the biggest announcements from Apple's "Glowtime" event.

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Apple Intelligence

Apple's core artificial intelligence offerings are being packaged and billed as Apple Intelligence — first revealed at the company's developers conference in June.

These features include the ability to search for images in your library by describing them, creating custom emojis, summarizing emails and prioritizing notifications. Apple Intelligence will also upgrade Apple's virtual assistant Siri to get it to better understand requests and give it some awareness of on-screen actions taking place on the phone, hopefully making it more useful.

What sets Apple apart from what's being offered by rivals Samsung and Google? It is trying to preserve its longtime commitment to privacy by tailoring its AI so that most of its functions are processed on the device itself instead of at remote data centers. When a task requires a connection to a data center, Apple promises it will be done in a tightly controlled way that ensures no personal data is stored remotely.

Most of Apple's AI functions will roll out as part of a free software update to iOS 18, the operating system that will power the iPhone 16 rolling out from October through December. U.S. English will be the featured language at launch but an update enabling other languages will come out next year, according to Apple.

iPhone 16 and the camera button

The iPhone 16 Pro and Pro Max will offer slightly bigger displays and feature variants of the powerful A18 chip, which gives Apple the computing power its devices need to run AI functions.

The iPhone 16 "has been designed for Apple Intelligence from the ground up," CEO Tim Cook said during Monday's event.

On the other end of the spectrum, the biggest physical change to the iPhone 16 lineup comes in the form of a dedicated camera-control button. The button responds to clicks and gestures, allowing users to quickly snap pictures, preview a shot or start video recording.

The button also allows owners to use something called Visual Intelligence, which will tell the iPhone 16 to automatically search on things you take photos of.

The phones will start shipping Sept. 20. The iPhone 16 will retail for \$799, with the Plus model going for \$899. The iPhone 16 Pro will cost \$999, while the Pro Max will sell for \$1,199.

Apple Watch upgrades

The Apple Watch Series 10 features a larger, and brighter, wide-angle OLED display that will allow users to better view the watch at an angle. But Apple focused much of its presentation on the device's ability to detect signs of sleep apnea.

The new device is also being offered in a titanium finish for the first time, joining a longtime trend in the watch industry of offering a tougher, more lightweight, and perceived higher-quality, alternative to traditional materials.

The Series 10 watch starts at \$399 and will be available on Sept. 20.

Airpods lean toward being a listening device

The new AirPods 4 series will come with an upgraded chip for better audio quality, and will feature more active noise cancellation.

If you frequently lose your ear buds, the new AirPods will also play a sound when you locate them through the Find My app.

In a medically focused update to the AirPods Pro 2, Apple said it will upgrade the devices so they can act as an over-the-counter hearing aid. A free software update will provide the upgrade and also include options to help protect hearing and the ability to administer a clinical-grade hearing test.

The AirPod 4 model costs \$129, while the version with active noise cancelling will cost \$179. They both ship on Sept. 20.

Many questions still loom over timeline of Georgia school shooting

By JEFF AMY Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Many questions in last week's Georgia school shooting are still unanswered, including how the suspect brought a semiautomatic assault rifle to the campus of Apalachee High School and what

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may have motivated the violence.

The shooting Wednesday in Winder, northeast of Atlanta, killed two teachers and two students. Another teacher and eight more students were wounded, with seven of those hit by gunfire.

Colt Gray, 14, is charged as an adult with four counts of murder, and District Attorney Brad Smith has said more charges are likely to be filed against him in connection with the wounded. Authorities have also charged his father, Colin Gray, alleging that he gave his son access to the gun when he knew or should have known that the teen was a danger to himself and others.

In the meantime, relatives are mourning the victims, including teachers Richard Aspinwall, 39, and Cristina Irimie, 53, and students Mason Schermerhorn and Christian Angulo, both 14.

The 13,000 students at Barrow County's other schools are supposed to return to class Tuesday. Officials have not announced a restart date for the 1,900 students who attend Apalachee.

Superintendent Dallas LeDuff, in a video message Sunday, said sheriff's deputies and state troopers will provide extra security when schools reopen Tuesday, with extra counseling available at all campuses.

Here's a timeline of what happened on the day of the attack, based on statements by authorities and reporting by The Associated Press and other news media:

8:15 a.m. — First period begins. Officials have not said what class Colt Gray was scheduled for, or if he attended. It's also unclear how Gray got to school that morning or if he was carrying the rifle with him.

9:38 a.m. — First period ends. Students have seven minutes to change to their next class.

9:45 a.m. — Second period begins. Student Lyela Sayarath said she briefly saw Gray in the algebra class where the two sat next to each other. But Gray left the room. Sayarath said she assumed Gray was skipping class, but it's not clear where he may have gone.

9:50 a.m. — Marcee Gray, Colt's mother, calls the high school from 200 miles away in Fitzgerald, Georgia, to warn that her son is having an "extreme emergency," according to call logs, texts and an interview by Gray's aunt, Annie Brown, with The Washington Post. Brown later confirmed the account to the AP but declined to comment further.

Brown said the mother texted her saying she spoke with a school counselor and urged them to "immediately" find her son to check on him. Call logs show the call lasted until 10 a.m. Relatives of Marcee Gray have told multiple media outlets that she received a text from her son that morning saying he was sorry, without saying what he was apologizing for.

9:45 a.m. to 10:20 a.m. — An administrator comes to the algebra classroom looking for a student with the same last name and a similar first name to Colt Gray, Sayarath said. The other student is in the bathroom, she said, but the administrator takes the other student's bag. When the other student returns, he tells Sayarath that the administrator was actually seeking Colt Gray. In the meantime, the teacher is called on the intercom, Sayarath said.

About 10:20 a.m. — Colt Gray approaches the door of the algebra classroom. As the intercom buzzes again, the teacher responds, "Oh, he's here," seeing Gray outside the classroom door, Sayarath said. When students go to open the door, which automatically locks from the inside when closed, Sayarath said they backed away. She said she saw Colt Gray turn away through the window of the door and then she said she heard 10 or 15 consecutive gunshots. People are shot in the hallway and inside at least one classroom, as others in the halls scramble for safety. According to some students, the three teachers are shot while trying to shield students.

10:23 a.m. — After multiple employees press wireless panic buttons embedded in their employee badges, the school goes into lockdown and a massive law enforcement response begins. Students in other classrooms who hear the gunshots begin texting and calling their parents and others.

10:26 a.m. — The two school resource officers assigned to Apalachee High School approach Gray in the hall, according to GBI Director Chris Hosey. Gray immediately surrenders and is taken into custody.

About 11 a.m. — Law enforcement officers begin searching Colin and Colt Gray's house east of Winder. At the school, officers go from classroom to classroom, first looking for more people with injuries or other shooters. Later, officers evacuate students to the football field as hundreds of parents rush to campus.

About 1 p.m. — The school begins releasing students to parents to take them home.

Morgan Wallen leads the 2024 Country Music Association award noms, Beyoncé's 'Cowboy Carter' snubbed

By MARIA SHERMAN AP Music Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — He had some help: Morgan Wallen tops the 2024 Country Music Association Awards nominations with seven.

For a third year in a row, Wallen is up for both the top prize — entertainer of the year — and the male vocalist categories.

Rounding out the entertainer of the year categories are Luke Combs, Jelly Roll, Chris Stapleton and Lainey Wilson.

Post Malone's massive radio hit, "I Had Some Help," which features Wallen, is the main reason why the country singer leads the pack this year. It is up for single, song, musical event and music video of the year. His last nomination is a second one in the musical event category, for his collaboration with Eric Church, "Man Made a Bar."

Single of the year is awarded to the artist, producer and mix engineers; song of the year is given to the songwriters.

Ahead of the nominations announcement, some fans speculated that Beyoncé, whose landmark country-and-then-some reclamation "Cowboy Carter" was released during the eligibility window, could receive a nomination at the 2024 CMAs. She did not.

Earlier this year, the album hit No. 1 on the Billboard country albums chart, making her the first Black woman to top the chart since its 1964 inception.

The album was five years in the making, a direct result of what Beyoncé has called "an experience that I had years ago where I did not feel welcomed ... and it was very clear that I wasn't," most likely a reference to a 2016 CMAs performance that resulted in racist backlash.

The CMA Awards are nominated and voted on by members of the Country Music Association, which includes music executives, artists, publicists, songwriters and other industry professionals.

Wallen is followed by both Cody Johnson, who is also nominated in the male vocalist category for the third year in a row, and 7-time male vocalist of the year winner, Stapleton.

Stapleton and Johnson have five nominations each.

But Stapleton could take home seven trophies, should he sweep his categories.

Stapleton is both an artist and producer on "White Horse," up for single of the year, and "Higher," up for album of the year.

At the CMAs, production credits are not counted as separate nominations, although they are factored into trophy counts.

First-time nominee Post Malone and Wilson, last year's entertainer of the year winner, are tied with four nominations. All of Malone's nominations are for "I Had Some Help."

Louis Bell, Charlie Handsome and Hoskins are tied with three nominations for their work as producers and co-writers on "I Had Some Help."

Jelly Roll, Combs, Kacey Musgraves and Megan Moroney also boast three nods each. The latter three could take home four trophies: Combs is both artist and producer on "Fathers & Sons," up for album of the year. The same is true for Musgraves' album "Deeper Well."

And Moroney is both artist and director of her nominated music video, "I'm Not Pretty."

The CMA Awards will air on Nov. 20 on ABC at 8 p.m. Eastern. It can be streamed the next day on Hulu.

Black Caucus issues new guidelines for DEI policies and urges firms to help reduce racial wealth gap

By MATT BROWN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Corporate policies meant to advance diversity and inclusion in the workplace are legal and should be expanded to promote broad economic prosperity and reduce racial wealth inequities,

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according to a new report by the Congressional Black Caucus.

The report released Monday offers guidelines to corporations on the best practices to adopt to advance diversity, equity and inclusion policies in the workplace and calls on companies to recommit to advance racial justice in the workplace. The document also includes a roadmap for advancing wealth creation in Black communities and closing the racial wealth gap.

"In the wake of the death of George Floyd, corporations pledged \$50 billion to racial equity and strengthening DEI policies," said Rep. Steven Horsford, D-Nev., chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, in an interview. "DEI is now under attack, but the response from corporate America has been overwhelming."

The findings follow a December open letter the caucus issued that called on corporations to "reaffirm their commitments to DEI" and work with the CBC to fulfill pledges on racial and economic inequality.

The study is the result of the ensuing monthslong dialogue between the caucus and nearly half of Fortune 500 companies, as well as academics and business analysts, to develop guidelines that promote DEI and Black economic mobility in an increasingly fraught political and legal environment. It cited corporations facing a backlash to such policies from conservative activists and lawmakers.

Horsford condemned "far right actors who are attempting to bully corporate America" to back away from DEI policies. He added that it was "erroneous" for corporations to rescind DEI policies because of the Supreme Court's June decision overturning affirmative action programs in college admissions, which did not directly address corporate DEI policies.

"There is nothing under the law that is illegal or unconstitutional about corporations advancing DEI policies. I commend the corporations that answered our call. We are now giving the roadmap for what good looks like," Horsford said, citing the study's title: "What Good Looks Like: A Corporate Accountability Report on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion."

Since the Supreme Court's ruling, more than a dozen Republican attorneys general have sent letters to Fortune 500 corporations threatening legal action over DEI policies. Earlier this year, GOP lawmakers in multiple states pursued restrictions on diversity and inclusion efforts in the workplace, and conservative legal groups have directed lawsuits at organizations focused on advancing underrepresented groups. Some companies have backed away from DEI policies they once promoted in the wake of Floyd's death.

DEI policies are official guidelines and programs meant to welcome people of various backgrounds into an organization and create a culture where they feel included to do their work. Such policies can be as broad or narrow as an organization decides and can focus on any demographic.

In the immediate wake of the Supreme Court ruling, the Democratic chair of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, a federal agency focused on civil rights policies in the workplace, stated that the decision "does not address employer efforts to foster diverse and inclusive workforces or to engage the talents of all qualified workers."

The study outlines twelve fields where corporations can focus on expanding DEI and help close the racial wealth gap, including guidance for workplace culture, data disaggregation, talent opportunities, retention rates, pay equity and procurement policies.

The study invites companies to "collaborate legislatively" to develop laws that "create perpetual accountability for corporate America, help close this massive gap of inequality, and support the values of our caucus."

Most firms that engaged with the study came from the manufacturing industry, followed by companies in the financial services and information sectors. Fifty CEOs sat down directly with the CBC while companies also responded with other top representatives, letters and answers to questionnaires from lawmakers.

The CBC is one of the largest and most influential blocs in the Democratic congressional caucus. Its membership spans the party's ideological and regional diversity but shares a commitment to advancing the interests of Black Americans, especially on issues like voting rights and economic mobility. House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries, D-N.Y., a CBC member, was involved in the development of the report.

"It is no longer acceptable to deliver promises without action," the report reads. "The murder of George Floyd, like many other police-related killings preceding and following, shook our community and lit a fire of activism in parts of the nation that may have otherwise never stepped forward. Most of these corpora-

tions took advantage of that season of activism and publicly vowed to fight alongside us. It is now time to hold these corporations accountable.”

Funeral held for an American activist a witness says was shot dead by Israeli troops

By IMAD ISSIED Associated Press

NABLUS, West Bank (AP) — The Palestinian Authority held a funeral procession Monday for an American activist who a witness says was shot and killed by Israeli forces last week following a demonstration against settlements in the occupied West Bank.

Dozens of mourners — including several leading officials of the Western-backed Palestinian Authority — attended the procession for Aysenur Ezgi Eygi, a 26-year-old from Seattle who also held Turkish citizenship.

Eygi’s body was draped in a Palestinian flag and her face was covered with a traditional black-and-white checkered scarf as security forces carried her and then placed her into a Palestinian ambulance.

Turkish Foreign Ministry Spokesman Oncu Keceli said his country was working on repatriating Eygi’s remains for burial in the Aegean coastal town of Didim as per her family’s wishes. Because the land crossing between the West Bank and Jordan was closed Sunday after an attack on Israeli civilians, the ministry was trying to have the body flown to Turkey.

U.S. officials did not respond to a request for comment.

Jonathan Pollak, an Israeli peace activist who participated in Friday’s protest with Eygi, said she posed no threat when Israeli forces shot her. He said the killing happened during a period of calm after clashes between soldiers and Palestinian protesters.

Pollak said he saw two Israeli soldiers mount the roof of a nearby home, train a gun in the group’s direction and fire, with one of the bullets striking Eygi in the head.

The Israeli military says it is investigating what happened. On Saturday it said an “initial inquiry” found that security forces had been deployed to disperse a riot near the town of Beita involving Palestinian and Israeli civilians that “included mutual rock hurling.” The security forces had fired shots in the air, the military said.

Eygi’s family has called on the Biden administration to launch an independent investigation into the killing. The family’s statement was published by International Solidarity Movement, the organization Eygi was volunteering with at the time of her death.

The West Bank has seen a surge of violence since the Israel-Hamas war began in October, with increasing Israeli raids, attacks by Palestinian militants on Israelis, and attacks by Israeli settlers on Palestinians.

On the streets of a Colorado city, pregnant migrants struggle to survive

By BIANCA VÁZQUEZ TONESS AP Education Writer

AURORA, Colo. (AP) — She was eight months pregnant when she was forced to leave her Denver homeless shelter. It was November.

Ivanni Herrera took her 4-year-old son Dylan by the hand and led him into the chilly night, dragging a suitcase containing donated clothes and blankets she’d taken from the Microtel Inn & Suites. It was one of 10 hotels where Denver has housed more than 30,000 migrants, many of them Venezuelan, over the last two years.

First they walked to Walmart. There, with money she and her husband had collected from begging on the street, they bought a tent.

They waited until dark to construct their new home. They chose a grassy median along a busy thoroughfare in Aurora, the next town over, a suburb known for its immigrant population.

“We wanted to go somewhere where there were people,” Herrera, 28, said in Spanish. “It feels safer.”

That night, temperatures dipped to 32 degrees. And as she wrapped her body around her son’s to keep

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him warm enough that he could sleep, Ivanni Herrera cried.

Seeking better lives, finding something else

Over the past two years, a record number of families from Venezuela have come to the United States seeking a better life for themselves and their children. Instead, they've found themselves in communities roiling with conflict about how much to help the newcomers — or whether to help at all.

Unable to legally work without filing expensive and complicated paperwork, some are homeless and gambling on the kindness of strangers to survive. Some have found themselves sleeping on the streets — even those who are pregnant.

Like many in her generation, regardless of nationality, Herrera found inspiration for her life's ambitions on social media. Back in Ecuador, where she had fled years earlier to escape the economic collapse in her native Venezuela, Herrera and her husband were emboldened by images of families like theirs hiking across the infamous Darién Gap from Colombia into Panama. If all those people could do it, they thought, so can we.

They didn't know many people who had moved to the United States, but pictures and videos of Venezuelans on Facebook and TikTok showed young, smiling families in nice clothes standing in front of new cars boasting of beautiful new lives. U.S. Border Patrol reports show Herrera and the people who inspired her were part of an unprecedented mass migration of Venezuelans to America. Some 320,000 Venezuelans have tried to cross the southern border since October 2022 — more than in the previous nine years combined.

Just weeks after arriving in Denver, Herrera began to wonder if the success she had seen was real. She and her friends had developed another theory: The hype around the U.S. was part of some red de engaño, or network of deception.

After several days of camping on the street and relieving herself outside, Herrera began to itch uncontrollably with an infection. She worried: Would it imperil her baby?

She was seeing doctors and social workers at a Denver hospital where she planned to give birth because they served everyone, even those without insurance. They were alarmed their pregnant patient was now sleeping outside in the cold.

Days after she was forced to leave the Microtel, Denver paused its policy and allowed homeless immigrants to stay in its shelters through the winter. Denver officials say they visited encampments to urge homeless migrants to come back inside. But they didn't venture outside the city limits to Aurora.

As Colorado's third-largest city, Aurora, on Denver's eastern edge, is a place where officials have turned down requests to help migrants. In February, the Aurora City Council passed a resolution telling other cities and nonprofits not to bring migrants into the community because it "does not currently have the financial capacity to fund new services related to this crisis." Yet still they come, because of its lower cost of living and Spanish-speaking community.

In fact, former President Donald Trump last week called attention to the city, suggesting a Venezuelan gang had taken over an apartment complex. Authorities say that hasn't happened.

The doctors treated Herrera's yeast infection and urged her to sleep at the hospital. It wouldn't cost anything, they assured her, just as her birth would be covered by emergency Medicaid, a program that extends the health care benefits for poor American families to unauthorized immigrants for labor and delivery.

Herrera refused.

"How," she asked, "could I sleep in a warm place when my son is cold on the street?"

Another family, cast out into the night

It was March when David Jaimez, his pregnant wife and their two daughters were evicted from their Aurora apartment. Desperate for help, they dragged their possessions into Thursday evening Bible study at Jesus on Colfax, a church and food pantry inside an old motel. Its namesake and location, Colfax Avenue, has long been a destination for the drug-addicted, homeless veterans and new immigrants.

When the Jaimez family arrived, the prayers paused. The manager addressed the family in elementary Spanish, supplementing with Google Translate on her phone.

After arriving from Venezuela in August and staying in a Denver-sponsored hotel room, they'd moved into an apartment in Aurora. Housing is cheaper in that eastern suburb, but they never found enough work to

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pay their rent. "I owe \$8,000," Jaimez said, his eyes wide. "Supposedly there's work here. I don't believe it."

Jaimez and his wife are eligible to apply for asylum or for "Temporary Protected Status" and, with that, work permits. But doing so would require an attorney or advisor, months of waiting and \$500 in fees each.

At the prayer group, Jaimez's daughters drank sodas and ate tangerines from one participant, a middle-aged woman and Aurora native. She stroked the ponytail of the family's 8-year-old daughter as the young girl smiled.

When the leader couldn't find anywhere for the family to stay, they headed out into the evening, pushing their year-old daughter in her stroller and lugging a suitcase behind them. After they left, the middle-aged woman leaned forward in her folding chair and said: "It's kind of crazy that our city lets them in but does not help our veterans." Nearby, a man nodded in agreement.

That night, Jaimez and his family found an encampment for migrants run by a Denver nonprofit called All Souls and moved into tent number 28. Volunteers and staff brought in water, meals and other resources. Weeks later, the family was on the move again: Camping without a permit is illegal in Denver, and the city closed down the encampment. All Souls re-established it in six different locations but closed it permanently in May.

At its peak, nearly 100 people were living in the encampment. About half had been evicted from apartments hastily arranged before their shelter time expired, said founder Candice Marley. Twenty-two residents were children and five women were pregnant, including Jaimez's wife. Marley is trying to get a permit for another encampment, but the permit would only allow people over 18.

"Even though there are lots of kids living on the street, they don't want them all together in a camp," Marley said. "That's not a good public image for them."

A city's efforts, not enough

Denver officials say they won't tolerate children sleeping on the street. "Did you really walk from Venezuela to be homeless in the U.S.? I don't think so," said Jon Ewing, spokesman for Denver's health and human services department. "We can do better than that."

Still, Denver struggled to keep up with the rush of migrants, many arriving on buses chartered by Texas to draw attention to the impact of immigration. All told, Denver officials say they have helped some 42,700 migrants since last year, either by giving them shelter or a bus fare to another city.

Initially, the city offered migrants with families six weeks in a hotel. But in May, on pace to spend \$180 million this year helping newcomers, the city scaled back its offer to future migrants while deepening its investment in people already getting help.

Denver paid for longer shelter stays for 800 migrants already in hotels and offered them English classes and help applying for asylum and work permits. But any migrants arriving since May have received only three days in a hotel. After that, some have found transportation to other cities, scrounged for a place to sleep or wandered into nearby towns like Aurora.

Today, fewer migrants are coming to the Denver area, but Marley still receives dozens of outreaches per week from social service agencies looking to help homeless migrants. "It's so frustrating that we can't help them," she said. "That leaves families camping on their own, unsupported, living in their cars. Kids can't get into school. There's no stability."

After the encampment closed, Jaimez and his family moved into a hotel. He paid by holding a cardboard sign at an intersection and begging for money. Their daughter only attended school for one month last year, since they never felt confident that they were settled anywhere more than a few weeks. The family recently moved to a farm outside of the Denver area, where they've been told they can live in exchange for working.

On the front lines of begging

When Herrera started feeling labor pains in early December, she was sitting on the grass, resting after a long day asking strangers for money. She waited until she couldn't bear the pain anymore and could feel the baby getting close. She called an ambulance.

The paramedics didn't speak Spanish but called an interpreter. They told Herrera they had to take her to the closest hospital, instead of the one in Denver, since her contractions were so close together.

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Her son was born healthy at 7 pounds, 8 ounces. She brought him to the tent the next day. A few days later the whole family, including the baby, had contracted chicken pox. "The baby was in a bad state," said Emily Rodriguez, a close friend living with her family in a tent next to Herrera's.

Herrera took him to the hospital, then returned to the tent before being offered a way out. An Aurora woman originally from Mexico invited the family to live with her — at first, for free. After a couple weeks, the family moved to a small room in the garage for \$800 a month.

To earn rent and pay expenses, Herrera and Rodriguez have cleaned homes, painted houses and shoveled snow while their children waited in a car by themselves. Finding regular work and actually getting paid for it has been difficult. While their husbands can get semi-regular work in construction, the women's most consistent income comes from something else: standing outside with their children and begging.

Herrera and her husband recently became eligible to apply for work permits and legal residency for Venezuelans who arrived in the United States last year. But it will cost \$800 each for a lawyer to file the paperwork, along with hundreds of dollars in government fees. They don't have the money.

One spring weekday, Herrera and Rodriguez stand by the shopping carts at the entrance to a Mexican grocery store. While their sons crawl along a chain of red shopping carts stacked together and baby Milan sleeps in his stroller, they try to make eye contact with shoppers.

Some ignore them. Others stuff bills in their hands. On a good day, each earns about \$50.

It comes easier for Rodriguez, who's naturally boisterous. "One day a man came up and gave me this iPhone. It's new," she says, waving the device in the air.

"Check out this body," she says as she spins around, laughing and showing off her ample bottom. "I think he likes me."

Herrera grimaces. She won't flirt like her friend does. She picks up Milan and notices his diaper is soaked, then returns him to the stroller. She has run out of diapers.

Milan was sick, but Herrera has been afraid to take him to the doctor. Despite what the hospital had said when she was pregnant, she was never signed up for emergency Medicaid. She says she owes \$18,000 for the ambulance ride and delivery of her baby. Now, she avoids going to the doctor or taking her children because she's afraid her large debt will jeopardize her chances of staying in the U.S. "I'm afraid they're going to deport me," she says.

But some days, when she's feeling overwhelmed, she wants to be deported — as long as she can take her children along. Like the day in May when the security guard at the Mexican grocery store chased off the women and told them they couldn't beg there anymore. "He insulted us and called us awful names," Rodriguez says.

The two women now hold cardboard signs along a busy street in Denver and then knock on the doors of private homes, never returning to the same address. They type up their request for clothes, food or money on their phones and translate it to English using Google. They hand their phones to whoever answers the door.

The American Dream, still out of reach

In the garage where Herrera and her family live, the walls are lined with stuffed animals people have given her and her son. Baby Milan, on the floor, pushes himself up to look around. Dylan sleeps in bed.

Herrera recently sent \$500 to her sister to make the months-long trip from Venezuela to Aurora with Herrera's 8-year-old daughter. "I'll have my family back together," she says. And she believes her sister will be able to watch her kids so Herrera can look for work.

"I don't feel equipped to handle all of this on my own," she says.

The problem is, Herrera hasn't told her family back in Venezuela how she spends her time. "They think I'm fixing up homes and selling chocolate and flowers," she says. "I'm living a lie."

When her daughter calls in the middle of the day, she's sure not to answer and only picks up after 6 p.m. "They think I'm doing so well, they expect me to send money," she says. And Herrera has complied, sending \$100 a week to help her sister pay rent and buy food for her daughter.

Finally, her sister and daughter are waiting across the border in Mexico. When we come to the U.S., her sister asks, could we fly to Denver? The tickets are \$600.

She has to come clean. She doesn't have the money. She lives day to day. The American Dream hasn't happened for Ivanni Herrera — at least, not yet. Life is far more difficult than she has let on.

She texts back:

No.

Grief over Gaza and qualms over US election add up to anguish for many Palestinian Americans

By MARIAM FAM Associated Press

Demoralized by the Biden administration's handling of the Israel-Hamas war, Palestinian American Samia Assed found in Vice President Kamala Harris' ascension — and her running mate pick — "a little ray of hope."

That hope, she said, shattered during last month's Democratic National Convention, where a request for a Palestinian American speaker was denied and listening to Harris left her feeling like the Democratic presidential nominee will continue the U.S. policies that have outraged many in the anti-war camp.

"I couldn't breathe because I felt unseen and erased," said Assed, a community organizer in New Mexico.

Under different circumstances, Assed would have reveled in the groundbreaking rise of a woman of color as her party's nominee. Instead, she agonizes over her ballot box options.

For months, many Palestinian Americans have been contending with the double whammy of the rising Palestinian death toll and suffering in Gaza and their own government's support for Israel in the war. Alongside pro-Palestinian allies, they've grieved, organized, lobbied and protested as the killings and destruction unfolded on their screens or touched their own families. Now, they also wrestle with tough, deeply personal voting decisions, including in battleground states.

"It's a very hard time for Palestinian youth and Palestinian Americans," Assed said. "There's a lot of pain."

Without a meaningful change, voting for Harris would feel for her "like a jab in the heart," she said. At the same time, Assed, a lifelong Democrat and feminist, would like to help block another Donald Trump presidency and remain engaged with the Democrats "to hold them liable," she said.

"It's really a difficult place to be in."

She's not alone.

In Georgia, the Gaza bloodshed has been haunting Ghada Elnajjar. She said the war claimed the lives of more than 100 members of her extended family in Gaza, where her parents were born.

She saw missed opportunities at the DNC to connect with voters like her. Besides the rejection of the request for a Palestinian speaker, Elnajjar found a disconnect between U.S. policies and Harris' assertion that she and President Joe Biden were working to accomplish a cease-fire and hostage deal.

"Without stopping U.S. financial support and military support to Israel, this will not stop," said Elnajjar who in 2020 campaigned for Biden. "I'm a U.S. citizen. I'm a taxpayer ... and I feel betrayed and neglected."

She'll keep looking for policy changes, but, if necessary, remain "uncommitted," potentially leaving the top of the ticket blank. Harris must earn her vote, she said.

Harris, in her DNC speech, said she and Biden were working to end the war such that "Israel is secure, the hostages are released, the suffering in Gaza ends and the Palestinian people can realize their right to dignity, security, freedom, and self-determination."

She said she "will always ensure Israel has the ability to defend itself," while describing the suffering in Gaza as "heartbreaking."

While her recent rhetoric on Palestinian suffering has been viewed as empathetic by some who had soured on Biden over the war, the lack of a concrete policy shift appears to have increasingly frustrated many of those who want the war to end. Activists demanding a permanent cease-fire have urged an embargo on U.S. weapons to Israel, whose military campaign in Gaza has killed over 40,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza health officials.

The war was sparked by an Oct. 7 attack on Israel in which Hamas-led militants killed some 1,200 people and took about 250 hostages.

Layla Elabed, a Palestinian American and co-director of the Uncommitted National Movement, said the

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demand for a policy shift remains. Nationally, "uncommitted" has garnered hundreds of thousands of votes in Democratic primaries.

Elabed said Harris and her team have been invited to meet before Sept. 15 with "uncommitted" movement leaders from key swing states and with Palestinian families with relatives killed in Gaza. After that date, she said, "we will need to make the decision if we can actually mobilize our base" to vote for Harris.

Without a policy change, "we can't do an endorsement," and will, instead, continue talking about the "dangers" of a Trump presidency, leaving voters to vote their conscience, she added.

Some other anti-war activists are taking it further, advocating for withholding votes from Harris in the absence of a change.

"There's pressure to punish the Democratic Party," Elabed said. "Our position is continue taking up space within the Democratic Party," and push for change from the inside.

Some of the tensions surfaced at an August rally in Michigan when anti-war protesters interrupted Harris. Initially, Harris said everybody's voice matters. As the shouting continued, with demonstrators chanting that they "won't vote for genocide," she took a sharper tone.

"If you want Donald Trump to win, then say that," she said.

Nada Al-Hanooti, national deputy organizing director with the Muslim American advocacy group Emgage Action, rejects as unfair the argument by some that traditionally Democratic voters who withhold votes from Harris are in effect helping Trump. She said the burden should be on Harris and her party.

"Right now, it's a struggle being a Palestinian American," she said. "I don't want a Trump presidency, but, at the same time, the Democratic Party needs to win our vote."

Though dismayed that no Palestinian speaker was allowed on the DNC stage, Al-Hanooti said she felt inspired by how "uncommitted" activists made Palestinians part of the conversation at the convention. Activists were given space there to hold a forum discussing the plight of Palestinians in Gaza.

"We in the community still need to continue to push Harris on conditioning aid, on a cease-fire," she said. "The fight is not over."

She said she's never known grief like that she has experienced over the past year. In the girls of Gaza, she sees her late grandmother who, at 10, was displaced from her home during the 1948 war surrounding Israel's creation and lived in a Syrian refugee camp, dreaming of returning home.

"It just completely tears me apart," Al-Hanooti said.

She tries to channel her pain into putting pressure on elected officials and encouraging community members to vote, despite encountering what she said was increased apathy, with many feeling that their vote won't matter. "Our job at Emgage is simply right now to get our Muslim community to vote because our power is in the collective."

In 2020, Emgage — whose political action committee then endorsed Biden — and other groups worked to maximize Muslim American turnout, especially in battleground states. Muslims make up a small percentage of Americans overall, but activists hope that in states with notable Muslim populations, such as Michigan, energizing more of them makes a difference in close races — and demonstrates the community's political power.

Some voters want to send a message.

"Our community has given our votes away cheaply," argued Omar Abuattieh, a pharmacy major at Rutgers University in New Jersey. "Once we can start to understand our votes as a bargaining tool, we'll have more power."

For Abuattieh, whose mother was born in Gaza, that means planning to vote third party "to demonstrate the power in numbers of a newly activated community that deserves future consultation."

A Pew Research Center survey in February found that U.S. Muslims are more sympathetic to the Palestinian people than many other Americans are and that only 6% of Muslim American adults believe the U.S. is striking the right balance between the Israelis and Palestinians. Nearly two-thirds of Muslim registered voters identify with or lean toward the Democratic Party, according to the survey.

But U.S. Muslims, who are racially and ethnically diverse, are not monolithic in their political behavior;

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some have publicly supported Harris in this election cycle. In 2020, among Muslim voters, 64% supported Biden and 35% supported Trump, according to AP VoteCast.

The Harris campaign said it has appointed two people for Muslim and Arab outreach.

Harris "will continue to meet with leaders from Palestinian, Muslim, Israeli and Jewish communities, as she has throughout her vice presidency," the campaign said in response to questions, without specifically commenting on the uncommitted movement's request for a meeting before Sept. 15.

Harris is being scrutinized by those who say the Biden-Harris administration hasn't done enough to pressure Israel to end the war and by Republicans looking to brand her as insufficient in her support for Israel.

Karoline Leavitt, the Trump campaign's national press secretary, said Trump "will once again deliver peace through strength to rebuild and expand the peace coalition he built in his first term to create long-term safety and security for both the Israeli and Palestinian people."

Many Arab and Muslim Americans were angered by Trump's ban, while in office, that affected travelers from several Muslim-majority countries, which Biden rescinded.

In Michigan, Ali Ramlawi, who owns a restaurant in Ann Arbor, said Harris' nomination initially gave him relief on various domestic issues, but the DNC left him disappointed on the Palestinian question.

Before the convention, he expected to vote Democratic, but now says he's considering backing the Green Party for the top of the ticket or leaving that blank.

"Our vote shouldn't be taken for granted," he said. "I won't vote for the lesser of two evils."

On the streets of a Colorado city, pregnant migrants struggle to survive

By BIANCA VÁZQUEZ TONESS AP Education Writer

AURORA, Colo. (AP) — She was eight months pregnant when she was forced to leave her Denver homeless shelter. It was November.

Ivanni Herrera took her 4-year-old son Dylan by the hand and led him into the chilly night, dragging a suitcase containing donated clothes and blankets away from the Microtel Inn & Suites. It was one of 10 hotels where Denver has housed more than 30,000 migrants, many of them Venezuelan, over the last two years.

First they walked to Walmart. There, with money she and her husband earned begging on the street, they bought a tent.

They chose for their new home a grassy median along a busy thoroughfare in Aurora, the next town over, a suburb known for its immigrant population.

"We wanted to go somewhere where there were people," Herrera, 28, said in Spanish. "It feels safer."

That night, temperatures dipped to 32 degrees. And as she wrapped her body around her son's, Ivanni Herrera cried.

Over the past two years, a record number of Venezuelans have come to the U.S. seeking a better life. Instead, they've found themselves in communities roiling over how much to help the newcomers — or whether to help at all.

Unable to legally work without filing expensive and complicated paperwork, some have found themselves sleeping on the streets — even those who are pregnant.

Herrera had found inspiration for her journey to the U.S. on social media. On Facebook and TikTok, young, smiling Venezuelan migrants in nice clothes stood in front of new cars. Some 320,000 Venezuelans have tried to cross the U.S. border since October 2022, according to U.S. Border Patrol reports — more than in the previous nine years combined.

Just weeks after arriving in Denver, Herrera began to wonder if the success she had seen was real.

She was seeing doctors and social workers at a Denver hospital where she planned to give birth because they served everyone, even those without insurance. They were alarmed their pregnant patient was now sleeping outside in the cold.

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In Colorado's third-largest city, Aurora, officials have turned down requests to help migrants. In February, the City Council passed a resolution telling other cities and nonprofits not to bring migrants into the community because it "does not currently have the financial capacity to fund new services." Yet still they come, because of its lower cost of living and Spanish-speaking community.

Former President Donald Trump last week called attention to the city, suggesting a Venezuelan gang had taken over an apartment complex. Authorities say that hasn't happened.

The doctors urged Herrera to sleep at the hospital. It wouldn't cost anything, they assured her, just as her birth would be covered by emergency Medicaid.

Herrera refused.

"How," she asked, "could I sleep in a warm place when my son is cold on the street?"

Denver struggled to keep up with the rush of migrants, many arriving on buses chartered by Texas to draw attention to the impact of immigration. All told, Denver officials say they have helped some 42,700 migrants since last year, either by giving them shelter or a bus fare to another city.

Initially, the city offered migrants with families six weeks in a hotel. But any migrants arriving since May have received only three days in a hotel. After that, some have found transportation to other cities, scrounged for a place to sleep or wandered into nearby towns like Aurora.

Today, fewer migrants are coming to the Denver area. But Candice Marley, founder of a nonprofit called All Souls, still receives dozens of outreaches per week from social service agencies looking to help homeless migrants. All Souls had run encampments for migrants, but Denver shut them down because they lacked a permit.

"It's so frustrating that we can't help them," Marley said. "That leaves families camping on their own, unsupported, living in their cars. Kids can't get into school. There's no stability."

When Herrera started feeling labor pains in early December, she waited until she couldn't bear the pain anymore and could feel the baby getting close. She called an ambulance.

The paramedics didn't speak Spanish but called an interpreter. They told Herrera they had to take her to the closest hospital, instead of the one in Denver, since her contractions were so close together.

Her son was born healthy at 7 pounds, 8 ounces. She brought him to the tent the next day. A few days later the whole family, including the baby, had contracted chicken pox. "The baby was in a bad state," said Emily Rodriguez, a close friend living with her family in a tent next to Herrera's.

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To earn rent and pay expenses, Herrera and Rodriguez have cleaned homes, painted houses and shoveled snow while their children waited in a car by themselves. Finding regular work and actually getting paid for it has been difficult. While their husbands can get semi-regular work in construction, the women's most consistent income comes from standing outside with their children and begging. On a good day, each earns about \$50.

Herrera and her husband recently became eligible to apply for work permits and legal residency for Venezuelans who arrived in the United States last year. But it will cost \$800 each for a lawyer to file the paperwork, along with hundreds of dollars in government fees. They don't have the money.

What's worse, they're deeply in debt. Despite what the hospital had said when she was pregnant, Herrera was never signed up for emergency Medicaid. She says she owes \$18,000 for the ambulance ride and delivery of her baby. Now, she avoids going to the doctor or taking her children because she's afraid her large debt will jeopardize her chances of staying in the U.S. "I'm afraid they're going to deport me," she says.

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The problem is, Herrera hasn't told her family back in Venezuela how she spends her time. "They think I'm fixing up homes and selling chocolate and flowers," she says. "I'm living a lie."

Finally, her sister and daughter are waiting across the border in Mexico. When we come to America, her sister asks, could we fly to Denver? The tickets are \$600.

Herrera has to come clean. Life is far more difficult than she has let on.

She texts back:

No.

A remote tribe is reeling from widespread illness and cancer. What role did the US government play?

By GABE STERN Associated Press

OWYHEE, Nev. (AP) — The family placed flowers by a pair of weathered cowboy boots, as people quietly gathered for the memorial of the soft-spoken tribal chairman who mentored teens in the boxing ring and teased his grandkids on tractor rides.

Left unsaid, and what troubled Marvin Cota's family deep down, was that his story ended like so many others on the remote Duck Valley Indian Reservation. He was healthy for decades. They found the cancer too late.

In the area, toxins are embedded in the soil and petroleum is in the groundwater — but no one can say for sure what has caused such widespread illness. Until recently, a now-razed U.S. maintenance building where fuel and herbicides were stored — and where Cota worked — was thought to be the main culprit. But the discovery of a decades-old document with a passing mention of Agent Orange chemicals suggests the government may have been more involved in contaminating the land.

"I don't know if I'm more mad than I am hurt," Terri Ann Cota said after her father's service. "Because if this is the case, it took a lot of good men away from us."

Owyhee is the sole town on the reservation, where snow-capped mountains loom over a valley of scattered homes and ranches, nearly 100 miles (161 kms) from any stoplights. The area is bookended by deep Nevada canyons and flat Idaho plains. For generations, the legacy and livelihoods of the Shoshone-Paiute tribes have centered around raising cattle year-round. And many still use the same medicinal plants and practice the same ceremonies as their relatives buried there.

First spills, then potential sprays

The U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs was an integral part of everyday life in Owyhee. The agency, which oversaw the maintenance building and irrigation shop, told the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in February that it found a revelatory document from 1997.

In it, a BIA employee recalled clearing foliage in the irrigation canals at least 20 years earlier, when he sprayed at least one of the herbicides — but possibly both — that make up Agent Orange. The EPA banned one of those chemicals in 1979 because of its cancer risks.

A BIA official told the EPA and tribal leaders that it was long believed the herbicides were used for weed control along certain roads — not the canals — before rediscovering the document.

The tribes' current leaders said they were unaware of either scenario. What alarms them, they say, is that the canal system has greater reach than the two-lane highway that runs through town.

Word cascaded down to tribal members, most of whom live along the canals, swam in them, used the water to farm on the edges, and gathered branches from surrounding willow trees to fashion cradleboards and roast marshmallows.

But they know little else.

Hundreds of pages of emails, memos and other documents obtained by The Associated Press show fed-

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eral agencies have promised the tribes that an investigation is coming. Still, the details are scarce because the BIA redacted or withheld most of the contents of the records.

The BIA declined interview requests from the AP but said it's evaluating the extent that Agent Orange components might have been used on the reservation.

Officials from the BIA and the EPA visited Duck Valley as recently as Aug. 7 to talk about the process of hiring a contractor to clean up contamination from the federal buildings, tribal leaders said. The presentation noted gaps in data analysis, including for the storage and use of herbicides.

Action can't come soon enough for tribal members who say the federal government's prior cleanup attempts have lacked urgency and direction. They fear inaction could lead to further sickness and death.

While tribal Chairman Brian Mason presses federal officials for answers, tribal members are being urged to get annual medical exams and an environmental team is tasked with digging up historical documents. "People are dying. And I don't know what they're waiting for," Mason said.

Back then, tribes were unaware of the dangers

There's a long legacy of contamination across Indian Country, ranging from uranium tailings in the Southwest to solvents dumped at a military installation in Alaska and pesticides used on the North Dakota plains. Health risks and other critical information are often concealed from Native American communities until years, sometimes decades, after the damage is done.

At Owyhee, most of the environmental dangers have been traced to the two BIA buildings no longer in use or demolished.

Back in 1985, at the now-abandoned irrigation shop, some 8,000 gallons of heating oil leaked from a pipeline next to the highway. Samples taken from sump, soil and floor drains around the building revealed a mix of the hazardous chemicals that were stored inside, including waste oil, arsenic, copper, lead and cadmium, along with the two herbicides that make up Agent Orange.

Racheal Thacker, a pesticides and solid waste technician with the tribes, said residents at the time were likely unaware of the dangers related to handling the chemicals stored there. Back then, the workers employed by the BIA didn't have the expertise or resources to identify pollutants in the ground, Thacker said.

Sherry Crutcher was always skeptical.

Her late husband worked in the BIA maintenance building across from the irrigation shop and wore a uniform that reeked of chemicals after spraying willow trees and cleaning oil wells. The building was home base for dozens of tribal members who plowed snow, fought fires and maintained the vehicle fleet.

Crutcher, a teacher and former natural resources director for the tribes, remembers employees in the maintenance building asking for cancer screenings. She said the BIA did the tests, told the workers the results were negative but didn't share the records.

She remembered asking her husband, Robert, if he or the other workers had any protection. The answer was always that he had none. He died in 2022 from an aggressive form of brain cancer at age 58, she said.

"I never overstepped my husband, I just asked him the questions," Sherry Crutcher said. "I'd be like 'why?' He was just a quiet soul, easygoing, and say 'well, you know, because it's our job.'"

In 1995, the EPA ordered the BIA to stop discharging gasoline, batteries and other fluids onto the dirt floor of the maintenance building, saying the practice was improper, threatened the groundwater supply and could endanger tribal members' health. The disposal practice had long-lasting effects and the building has since been demolished with its surroundings fenced off.

In its statement to the AP, the BIA said it has extensively studied the soil and groundwater on the reservation since 1999 and cleaned up wells used for drinking water. The agency also said any petroleum in the soil is safe and it's working with the tribes on other remedial actions.

Thacker said there's no ostensible danger now from drinking water from the tap, since it's drawn from other wells. Still, there's an enduring sense of distrust and uneasiness.

Some patches of land can no longer sustain crops. Fences surround contaminated areas. And after tribal officials raised concerns about hydrocarbon plumes under the one school in town, the state committed to building a new school on a different plot of land.

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Chairman's message reverberates throughout the community

Mason stood at a podium in March and declared — without any caveats — that the tribes' land was further poisoned. Agent Orange chemicals were sprayed extensively by the canals, he said, and demanded the federal government do something — and quick.

His broadcast on social media reverberated across the reservation.

The editor of the community newspaper, Alexis Smith-Estevan, listened from her couch and cried, saying she was even more certain now the federal government's contamination of the land led to the deaths of her grandfather and uncle. A grant assistant at the health clinic, Michael Hanchor, heard about it while getting signatures for paperwork and sighed.

Hanchor wasn't surprised. He said he saw it as yet another government failure in line with forcing his ancestors onto a reservation and sending Shoshone-Paiute children to boarding schools meant to assimilate them into white society.

"When you get that sense of defeat your whole life, you just kind of shrug your shoulders and move on," said Hanchor, who lost his mother and a grandfather figure to cancer.

Tanya Smith Beaudoin later walked along a canal where two dirt roads converge off the highway. The canal served as a de-facto swimming pool on hot summer days known to locals as "Floramae's," named for a sweet elder with a tough exterior who once lived next door.

Smith Beaudoin thought of her own father, Dennis Smith Sr., an influential tribal leader who befriended strangers at the market and organized big family dinners. He was diagnosed with late-stage liver cancer that spread to most of his upper body years after working alongside Cota and Robert Crutcher in the BIA maintenance building, she said.

"What can you do? If you were to get infected like he was, it was a death sentence. There's nothing — there's no treating it," she said.

To many in the community, there is a clear link between past contaminants and the pronounced number of cancer cases and other illnesses.

"I'm going to run out of days sooner than I should've," said Julie Manning, a tribal member who was diagnosed with advanced stage ovarian cancer last year. "And my child can pick up the pieces, and she's been holding them together. And BIA can say 'whoops, sorry.'"

The chairman's announcement validated those beliefs. Still, health experts say it's nearly impossible to say with certainty that the environment factored into cancer diagnoses and deaths — especially without robust data.

The tribal health clinic has logged more than 500 illnesses since 1992 that could be cancer, and is trying to break down the reservation's data to determine the most common types. A switch in recent years from paper to electronic filing means the records are likely incomplete.

Genetics, lifestyle and other factors often combine to cause cancer. Even if the BIA is able to account for the time, frequency, concentration and volume of herbicides sprayed on the reservation, that wouldn't be enough to prove a cause, experts say.

"Bottom line is it's really, really complicated even to establish among things we already sort of know about," said Lauren Teras, the senior scientific director of epidemiology research at the American Cancer Society.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, which compensates some Vietnam War veterans for exposure to Agent Orange, presumes that certain cancers and other illnesses are caused by the chemical herbicide but doesn't make the link definitive.

Mason has called for a study that would give tribal members a better idea of the extent chemicals could have been sprayed and the effect on the tribes' land and its residents. He said that might provide tribal members a pathway to seek payment from the federal government.

Rooted in the land

Shoshone and Paiute tribes once separately occupied an expanse of Nevada, Idaho and Oregon before the federal government forced them onto a reservation just under the size of New York City.

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They've lived together for generations as "Sho-Pais," connected by a farming and ranching heritage while cheering on youth sports games and gathering for the annual Fourth of July rodeo and powwow.

High school graduates who leave often find their way home after going to college or working in trades, in a sort of coming-of-age cycle, said Lynn Manning-John, the school's principal. Of the more than 2,000 tribal members, 1,800 or so live on the reservation — "the only place in the world where being Shoshone-Paiute is normal," she said.

At the school, lessons are tied to being Sho-Pai. Elementary students learn the "Hokey Pokey" in the Paiute language. Other students talk to an elder in their family and bring a picture of them to hang on the classroom walls.

"If the whole world shut down, we have everything we need to survive here," said Manning-John, whose childhood home is now fenced off due to underground contaminants. "We have animals in the mountains, we have trees that we subsist upon for our plant medicines, we have berries, we have roots."

"We have our beautiful water" from the mountains, she said. "But not, apparently, our water from the canal."

Mason acknowledged an investigation into Agent Orange components will take time, even as he pushes for expediency. He was elected as chairman two years ago, marking a shift from a long line of ranchers who led the tribes to a Marine Corps veteran who most recently worked as an environmental specialist in mines across Nevada.

He likened taking the leadership post to peeling back the layers of an onion, confronting questions deeper and more personal to the tribes than before.

He grimaced when asked if the community would move off the land if it's eventually deemed unsafe.

"I wouldn't say never," he said. "But people have five, six, seven generations buried here. And they're not going to leave their people. I can guarantee that."

Pope cheers East Timor's recovery while acknowledging a bishop's abuse scandal

By NICOLE WINFIELD and NINIEK KARMINI Associated Press

DILI, East Timor (AP) — Pope Francis received a raucous welcome Monday as he arrived in East Timor to celebrate its recovery from a bloody and traumatic independence battle, even as he indirectly acknowledged an abuse scandal involving its Nobel Peace Prize-winning hero.

Timorese jammed Francis' motorcade route into town from the airport, waving Vatican and Timorese flags and toting yellow and white umbrellas — the colors of the Holy See — to shade themselves from the scorching midday sun.

"Viva el Papa!" they shouted as he passed by. The 87-year-old Francis seemed to relish the greeting, smiling broadly from the open-backed pickup truck and waving as he passed by billboard after billboard featuring his image and words of welcome.

The overwhelmingly Catholic East Timor, one of the world's poorest countries, had eagerly awaited Francis' arrival, which came on the heels of the 25th anniversary of the U.N.-backed referendum that paved the way for independence from Indonesia.

It was a far different atmosphere than when the last pope visited. St. John Paul II came in 1989, when Timor was still an occupied part of Indonesia and fighting for its freedom. After Timorese voted overwhelmingly for independence a decade later, Indonesia's military responded with a scorched-earth campaign that destroyed 80% of the country's infrastructure and shocked the world. Overall, as many as 200,000 people were killed during the 24 years of Indonesian rule.

John Paul's visit, which culminated with a massive Mass on the seaside near Dili, helped draw international attention to the plight of the Timorese people and shine a spotlight on the oppressiveness of Indonesia's military occupation.

Francis arrived in Dili from Papua New Guinea to follow in John Paul's footsteps and open the third leg

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of his trip through Southeast Asia and Oceania. President Jose Ramos-Horta and Prime Minister Xanana Gusmao, two of East Timor's most revered independence heroes, greeted Francis at the airport and met with him privately.

In remarks to them and other dignitaries Monday, Francis applauded the Timorese people for having recovered from their "greatest suffering and trial" to put East Timor on the path of peaceful development. And he praised them for having reconciled with Indonesia.

But he said new challenges and problems were now confronting the country, Asia's newest, including emigration and poverty, as well as alcohol abuse and violence involving martial arts gangs.

"Let us also not forget that these children and adolescents have their dignity violated," Francis said. "In response, we are all called to do everything possible to prevent every kind of abuse and guarantee a healthy and peaceful childhood for all young people."

It was a generic and indirect reference to "abuse." But it nevertheless recalled the scandal involving Timorese Bishop Carlos Ximenes Belo who, along with Gusmao and Ramos-Horta, is regarded as a hero for their efforts to support Timor's independence.

Belo won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1996 with Ramos-Horta for campaigning for a fair and peaceful solution to the conflict.

But in 2022, the Vatican acknowledged that it had secretly sanctioned Belo two years earlier for sexually abusing young boys. The sanctions included limitations on his movements and exercise of ministry and prohibited him from having voluntary contact with minors or contact with East Timor itself. The sanctions were reinforced in 2021.

Despite the sanctions, which were confirmed at the time by the Vatican spokesman and reaffirmed last week ahead of Francis' trip, many people in East Timor have stood by Belo, either dismissing, denying or diminishing the victims' claims. Some even hoped Belo, who lives in Portugal, would be on hand to welcome Francis.

Another priest, American missionary Richard Daschbach, who is also revered for his role in saving lives in the liberation fight, is serving a 12-year sentence in a Timorese prison for molesting disadvantaged girls. He was defrocked by the church.

Ramos-Horta, for his part, told The Associated Press last week that Francis' visit was not the time to revisit the church's scandals. While saying it was for the Vatican to manage, having the pope raise the matter of abuse during his visit "would be like trying someone twice," he told AP.

Francis' vague reference to abuse appeared a diplomatic balancing act, acknowledging the abuse but respecting the desires of the government hosting him and sentiment of the local church and Timorese faithful.

The issue is fraught too for the Vatican, since there has been no acknowledgment of what the Vatican knew and when about Belo, whose misconduct was reportedly an open secret in Timor for years.

John Paul allowed him to retire as head of the Timorese church two decades early in 2002, at the young age of 54, but he was then sent to Mozambique, where he worked with children.

In a 2023 interview with the AP, Francis suggested that Belo, like many others before and after him, had been allowed to quietly retire rather than face any punishment for his misconduct.

The Vatican appears now to be trying to quietly ignore him: While an Aug. 28 report in Vatican News cited Belo for his help in the independence struggle, the official handbook for the Vatican delegation on the trip has scrubbed any mention of Belo from its short history on Timor and its battle for liberation.

In his speech, Ramos-Horta also avoided any mention of Belo in thanking Francis for coming 35 years after John Paul.

"We ask God to continue to hear our prayers, granting the Holy Father great health so that he can continue to inspire and guide humanity along the paths of peace and human fraternity," he said.

Only about 20% of East Timor's people were Catholic when Indonesia invaded in 1975, shortly after Portugal abandoned it as a colony. Today, some 98% of East Timor's 1.3 million people are Catholic, making it the most Catholic country in the world outside the Vatican.

"As a Catholic, we are so happy with the arrival of the pope in East Timor," said Jose de Araujo, who was

among the throngs welcoming Francis.

Francis will celebrate that Catholic heritage on Tuesday especially, when he celebrates a Mass on the same seaside esplanade where John Paul celebrated Mass in 1989 and encouraged the Timorese people.

Authorities said some 300,000 people in a country of 1.3 million had registered through their dioceses to attend. But Ramos-Horta said he expected 700,000, including from Indonesia's West Timor, and the Vatican predicted 750,000.

Harris' past debates: A prosecutor's style with narrative flair but risks in a matchup with Trump

By BILL BARROW Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — From her earliest campaigns in California to her serving as President Joe Biden's running mate, Kamala Harris has honed an aggressive but calibrated approach to debates.

She tries to blend punch lines with details that build toward a broader narrative. She might shake her head to signal her disapproval while her opponent is speaking, counting on viewers to see her reaction on a split screen. And she has a go-to tactic to pivot debates back in her favor: saying she's glad to answer a question as she gathers her thoughts to explain an evolving position or defend a past one.

Tuesday's presidential debate will put the Democratic vice president's skills to a test unlike any she's faced. Harris faces former President Donald Trump, the Republican nominee, who will participate in his seventh general election debate since 2016 for an event that will be seen by tens of millions of viewers just as early voting in November's election starts around the country.

People who have competed against Harris and prepared her rivals say she brings a series of advantages to the matchup, including her prosecutorial background juxtaposed with Trump being the first U.S. president convicted of felony crimes. Still, Harris allies warn that Trump can be a challenging and unpredictable opponent who veers between policy critiques, personal attacks, and falsehoods or conspiracy theories.

"She can meet the moment," said Marc Short, who led Republican Vice President Mike Pence's debate preparation against Harris in the fall of 2020. "She has shown that in different environments. I would not underestimate that in any way."

Julian Castro, a Democrat who ran for president against Harris in the 2020 primary, said Harris blended "knowledge, poise and the ability to explain things well" to stand out during crowded primary debates.

"Some candidates get too caught up with trying to be catchy, trying to go viral," Castro said. "She's found a very good balance."

Balancing narrative and detail

A former Harris aide, who spoke on condition of anonymity to talk about her approach, said the vice president views the events like a jury trial she would have led when she was district attorney in San Francisco or querying a judicial nominee on Capitol Hill as a U.S. senator. The idea, the former aide said, has always been to win the debate on merit while leaving more casual or piecemeal viewers with key takeaways.

"She understands that debates are about the individual interactions themselves but also about a larger strategy of offering a vision for what your leadership and style looks like," said Tim Hogan, who led Sen. Amy Klobuchar's 2020 primary debate preparation.

Kathleen Hall Jamieson, a political communications professor at the University of Pennsylvania, said Harris makes deductive arguments but folds them into a broader narrative — the same way she would talk to jurors.

"She states a thesis and then follows with fact, fact, fact," Jamieson said.

Jamieson pointed to the 2020 vice presidential debate in which Harris hammered Trump's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic and the economy, and to her most memorable 2019 primary debate when she skewered Biden for how he had talked about race and institutional racism. She weaved her critique of Biden's record with her own biography as a young, biracial student in the early era of school integration.

"That little girl was me," Harris said in a widely circulated quip that punctuated her story about court-ordered busing that helped non-white students attend integrated schools.

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"Most people who are good at the deductive argument aren't good at wrapping that with an effective narrative," Jamieson said. "She's good at both."

Landing memorable punches

Castro said Harris has a good feel for when to strike, a quality he traced to her trial experience. In 2019, as multiple Democratic candidates talked over one another, Harris sat back before getting moderators to recognize her.

"Hey, guys, you know what? America does not want to witness a food fight. They want to know how we're going to put food on their table," she said, taking control of the conversation and drawing applause.

When Harris faced Pence in 2020, it was a mostly civil, substantive debate. But she got in digs that framed Pence as a serial interrupter, as Trump had been in his first debate with Biden.

"Mr. Vice President, I'm speaking," she said at one point, with a stern look. At another: "If you don't mind letting me finish, we can have a conversation."

Finding traps in policy

Debates have sometimes put Harris on the defensive.

In the 2020 primary matches, Tulsi Gabbard, who this year has endorsed Trump, blitzed Harris over how aggressively she prosecuted nonviolent drug offenders as a district attorney.

That fall, Pence made Harris sometimes struggle to defend Biden's positions. Now, her task will be to defend not just Biden's record, but her own role in that record and what policies she would pursue as president.

Short, one of Pence's top aides, noted that Republicans and the media have raised questions about more liberal positions Harris took in her 2020 primary campaign, especially on fracking, universal healthcare, reparations for slavery and how to treat migrants who cross the U.S. border illegally.

"We were surprised that she missed some opportunities (against Pence) when the conversation was centered around policy," Short said.

Timing, silence and nonverbal communication

One of Harris' earliest debate triumphs came in 2010 as she ran for California attorney general. Her opponent was asked about his plans to accept his public pension while still being paid a salary for a current public post.

"I earned it," Republican Steve Cooley said of the so-called "double-dipping" practice.

Harris looked on silently, with a slightly amused look as Cooley explained himself. When moderators recognized her, she said just seven words – "Go for it, Steve. You earned it!" — in a serious tone but with a look that communicated her sarcasm. The exchange landed in her television ads within days.

"Kamala Harris is quite effective at nonverbal communication and knowing when not to speak," Jamieson said.

The professor said Harris often will shake her head and, with other looks, telegraph her disapproval while her opponent is speaking. Then she smiles before retorting, or attacking, in a conversational tone.

"She defuses some of the argument that Trump makes that she is 'a nasty woman,' that she's engaging in egregiously unfair behavior, because her nonverbal presentation is actually undercutting that line of attack," Jamieson said.

Meeting a new challenge with Trump

For all of Harris' debate experience, Tuesday is still a new and massive stage. Democrats who ordinarily tear into Trump instead appeared on Sunday's news shows to make clear that Harris faced a big task ahead.

"It will take almost superhuman focus and discipline to deal with Donald Trump in a debate," said Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg, yet another of Harris' 2020 opponents, on CNN. "It's no ordinary proposition, not because Donald Trump is a master of explaining policy ideas and how they're going to make people better off. It's because he's a master of taking any form or format that is on television and turning it into a show that is all about him."

Castro noted that Trump is "a nasty and crafty stage presence" who makes preparation difficult. And with ABC keeping the candidates' microphones off when they are not speaking, Harris may not find it as easy to

produce another viral moment that hinges on viewers having seen or heard Trump at his most outlandish. "The best thing she can do," Castro said, "is not get distracted by his antics."

Vietnam storm deaths rise to 64 as a bridge collapses and flooding sweeps away a bus

By ANIRUDDHA GHOSAL Associated Press

HANOI, Vietnam (AP) — A bridge collapsed and a bus was swept away by flooding in Vietnam on Monday, raising the death toll in the Southeast Asian country to at least 64 from a typhoon and subsequent heavy rains that also damaged factories in export-focused northern industrial hubs, state media reported.

Nine people died on Saturday after Typhoon Yagi made landfall in Vietnam before weakening into a tropical depression. The rest died in the floods and landslides that followed on Sunday and Monday, state media VN Express reported.

The water levels of several rivers in northern Vietnam were dangerously high.

A bus carrying 20 people was swept into a flooded stream by a landslide in mountainous Cao Bang province on Monday morning. State media said four bodies were recovered from the bus and one person was rescued alive. The others were still missing.

In Phu Tho province, rescue operations were continuing after a steel bridge over the engorged Red River collapsed Monday morning. Reports said 10 cars and trucks along with two motorbikes fell into the river. Some people were pulled out of the river and taken to a hospital, but at least 10 people were still missing.

Nguyen Minh Hai, who fell into the flooded river, told state Vietnam Television, "I was so scared when I fell down. I felt like I've just escaped death. I can't swim and I thought I would die."

Pham Truong Son, 50, told VN Express that he was driving on the bridge on his motorcycle when he heard a loud noise. Before he knew what was happening, he was falling into the river. "I felt like I was drowning at the bottom of the river," Son told the news outlet, adding that he managed to swim and hold on to a drifting banana tree to stay afloat before he was rescued.

Dozens of businesses in Haiphong province haven't resumed production because of extensive damage to their factories, state newspaper Lao Dong reported. It said the roofs of several factories were blown apart and water seeped inside, damaging finished goods and expensive equipment. Some companies said they still didn't have electricity on Monday and that it would take at least a month to resume production.

Parts of Haiphong and Quang Ninh provinces were still without power on Monday. The two provinces are industrial hubs, housing many factories that export goods, including EV maker VinFast and Apple suppliers Pegatron and USI. Authorities are still assessing the damage to factories, but initial estimates showed that nearly 100 enterprises were damaged, resulting in millions of dollars in losses, the newspaper reported.

Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh visited Haiphong city on Sunday and approved a \$4.62 million package to help the port city recover.

Typhoon Yagi was the strongest typhoon to hit Vietnam in decades when it made landfall Saturday with winds up to 149 kph (92 mph). It weakened Sunday, but the country's meteorological agency warned that continuing downpours could cause floods and landslides.

On Sunday, a landslide killed six people including an infant and injured nine others in Sapa town, a popular trekking base known for its terraced rice fields and mountains. Overall, state media reported 21 deaths and at least 299 people injured from the weekend.

Skies were overcast in the capital, Hanoi, with occasional rain Monday morning as workers cleared up-rooted trees, fallen billboards and toppled electricity poles. Heavy rain continued in northwestern Vietnam and forecasters said it could exceed 40 centimeters (15 inches) in places.

Yagi also damaged agricultural land.

Before hitting Vietnam, Yagi caused at least 20 deaths in the Philippines last week and four deaths in southern China.

Chinese authorities said infrastructure losses across Hainan island province amounted to \$102 million

with 57,000 houses collapsed or damaged, power and water outages and roads damaged or impassable due to fallen trees. Yagi made a second landfall in Guangdong, a mainland province neighboring Hainan, on Friday night.

Storms like Typhoon Yagi are "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," said Benjamin Horton, director of the Earth Observatory of Singapore.

Waffle House CEO Walt Ehmer has died at age 58

ATLANTA (AP) — Walt Ehmer, the president and CEO of Waffle House and a member of the board of trustees for the Atlanta Police Foundation, has died at age 58, the foundation announced Sunday.

Ehmer joined Waffle House in 1992 and quickly rose to senior leadership, becoming president of the company in 2002, and later adding the titles of CEO and chairman, according to information from Georgia Tech, his alma mater.

"His leadership, dedication and warmth touched the lives of many, both within the Waffle House family and beyond. He leaves behind a remarkable legacy," Mayor Andre Dickens said in a news release.

The board of directors for Waffle House issued a statement Sunday afternoon saying Ehmer died after a long illness. "He will be greatly missed by his entire Waffle House family," the statement said.

Ehmer was chair of the Georgia Tech Alumni Association Board of Trustees from 2012 to 2013 and served numerous organizations, including the Georgia Tech Foundation Board and the Georgia Tech Advisory Board.

The Waffle House chain of around-the-clock diners opened in 1955 and now boasts more than 1,900 locations in 25 states.

Ehmer is survived by three children, according to The Atlanta Journal-Constitution.

Talking about death can be tricky. Here's how to start the conversation

By ADITHI RAMAKRISHNAN AP Science Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Dr. Vanessa Rodriguez is no stranger to talking about death.

As a palliative care doctor at New York's Mount Sinai Hospital, she works with families of patients at the ends of their lives. Many are hesitant to talk about death before the fact since it means imagining a future without their loved one.

Talking about death is never easy, but doing so early can help families prepare. Here's how to open the floor for an often tricky conversation.

Start an open and honest dialogue

Thinking through details and resolving loose ends can help families cope when the inevitable happens: Where might their loved one like to be buried? Are finances squared away?

"It really can help ease the anxiety that this moment can bring," Rodriguez said.

Settling other questions such as what song to play at a memorial or what old boxes to go through allows a loved one to have a say in their situation.

"They're tough conversations," Rodriguez said. "But there are so many tough conversations we have to have in life, and this shouldn't be of less importance."

Set expectations

Talking about death with a loved one doesn't make the loss hurt less, Rodriguez said. But it can help families know what to expect.

Recently, Rodriguez sat down with a 93-year-old patient and her family. After talking through the patient's care details, Rodriguez asked her daughter, "Have you thought about what things might look like when your mom isn't here anymore?"

The daughter brushed it off at first. But as Rodriguez kept talking, tears welled in the daughter's eyes. Having limited her mother's hospital visits as much as possible, she realized it was important to her that

her mother died at home. Rodriguez then suggested setting the patient up with hospice care at home — treatment designed to reduce pain and suffering in the final months.

Conversations about death go over easier when they come from someone you trust, Rodriguez said. It's important to assess how a family member feels about the topic before going deep.

Keep it light

Conversations about death don't have to be heavy. Britna Savarese shrugs off the doom and gloom by being direct, asking: "I've been planning my death today. How about you?"

"It almost shocks them," said Savarese, a death doula from Dallas who helps navigate the dying process. "But then it's kind of silly. And that can be disarming."

Savarese hosts Death Cafes: coffee shop soirees where attendees of all ages eat cake and chat about dying. Discussion topics at the cafes, which take place globally, range from funeral horror stories to questions about the afterlife.

Cutting through the fear of death can make it less scary to talk about, Savarese said.

But if someone is truly hesitant or scared to talk about it, she recommends framing the conversation around their needs: "As scary as it may be to you, it's important to me that you have the very best death that you can and that we are honoring you the way that you want to be honored."

Fear of death can stem from the uncertainty surrounding it. Voicing those concerns and preparing ahead of time can allow loved ones and their families to control what they can, Rodriguez said.

Takeaways from AP's report on the dilemmas facing Palestinian Americans ahead of US election

By MARIAM FAM Associated Press

Many Palestinian Americans, in recent months, have been reeling from the double blow of the rising Palestinian death toll and suffering in Gaza and their own government's support for Israel in the war. Alongside pro-Palestinian allies, they've grieved, organized, lobbied and protested as the killings and destruction unfolded on their TV screens or affected their own families. Now, they are also wrestling with tough, deeply personal voting decisions ahead of the Nov. 5 U.S. election.

A "ray of hope" shattered

In some ways, Samia Assed — a community organizer from New Mexico — epitomizes the frustrations felt by many Palestinian Americans. Demoralized by the Biden administration's handling of the Israel-Hamas war, she found in Vice President Kamala Harris' ascension — and her running mate pick — "a little ray of hope."

That hope, she said, was shattered during last month's Democratic National Convention, where a request for a Palestinian American speaker was denied and listening to Harris left her feeling like the Democratic presidential nominee will continue with the U.S. policies that have outraged many in the anti-war camp.

"I couldn't breathe because I felt unseen and erased," said Assed.

Looking for policy change, but prepared to remain "uncommitted"

In Georgia, the bloodshed has been haunting Ghada Elnajjar, who said the war claimed the lives of more than 100 members of her extended family in Gaza, where her parents were born.

She saw in the DNC missed opportunities to connect with voters like her. Besides rejection of the request for a Palestinian speaker to take the stage at the event, Elnajjar found a disconnect between U.S. policies and Harris' assertion that she and President Joe Biden were working to get a cease-fire and hostage deal done.

"Without stopping U.S. financial support and military support to Israel, this will not stop," said Elnajjar who in 2020 campaigned for Biden. "I'm a U.S. citizen. I'm a taxpayer ... and I feel betrayed and neglected."

She'll keep looking for policy change signals, but, if necessary, remain "uncommitted," potentially leaving the top of the ticket blank.

Layla Elabed, a Palestinian American and co-director of the Uncommitted National Movement, said the

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demand for a policy shift remains. Nationally, "uncommitted" has garnered hundreds of thousands of votes in Democratic primaries, and movement representatives have taken their advocacy to the DNC.

Harris stands by Israel, says Palestinian suffering in Gaza is "heartbreaking"

Harris, in her DNC speech, said she "will always ensure Israel has the ability to defend itself," while saying the scale of suffering in Gaza is "heartbreaking."

While her acknowledgement of the plight of Palestinian civilians in Gaza has been viewed as empathetic by some of those who had soured on Biden over the war, the lack of a concrete policy shift commitment appears to have increasingly frustrated many of those who want the war to end. Activists had called for a permanent cease-fire and an embargo on U.S. weapons to Israel, whose military campaign in Gaza has killed over 40,000 Palestinians, according to the enclave's health officials.

The war was sparked by an Oct. 7 attack on Israel in which Hamas-led militants killed some 1,200 people and took about 250 hostages.

Opposed to Trump, but so far unconvinced by Harris

Some of the tensions were displayed at an August rally in Michigan when protesters interrupted Harris. At first, Harris said that everybody's voice matters, but as the shouting continued with demonstrators chanting that they "won't vote for genocide," she took a sharper tone. "If you want Donald Trump to win, then say that," she said.

Nada Al-Hanooti, national deputy organizing director with Muslim American advocacy group Engage Action, rejects as unfair the argument by some that traditionally Democratic voters who withhold votes from Harris in protest are helping Trump, saying the burden should be on Harris and her party to do better.

"Right now, it's a struggle being a Palestinian American," she said. "I don't want a Trump presidency, but, at the same time, the Democratic Party needs to win our vote."

She said Engage is working "to get our Muslim community to vote because our power is in the collective."

Pew survey this year: most U.S. Muslim voters identify or lean Democratic

A Pew Research Center survey in February found that U.S. Muslims are more sympathetic to the Palestinian people than many other Americans are and that only 6% of U.S. Muslim adults believe that the U.S. is striking the right balance between the Israelis and Palestinians. Nearly two-thirds of Muslim registered voters identify with or lean toward the Democratic party, according to the survey.

But U.S. Muslims, who are racially and ethnically diverse, are, also, like others, not monolithic in their political behavior, and some have publicly supported Harris. In 2020, among Muslim voters, 64% supported Biden and 35% supported Trump, according to AP VoteCast.

The rival campaigns each say they merit support

The Harris campaign said it appointed two people for Muslim and Arab outreach.

Harris "will continue to meet with leaders from Palestinian, Muslim, Israeli and Jewish communities, as she has throughout her vice presidency," the campaign said in response to questions.

Asked about their outreach efforts to Palestinian, Arab and Muslim Americans and the U.S. policy concerns of anti-war voters, Karoline Leavitt, the Trump campaign's national press secretary, said the former president "will once again deliver peace through strength to rebuild and expand the peace coalition he built in his first term to create long-term safety and security for both the Israeli and Palestinian people."

Today in History: September 10, Clarence Thomas' Supreme Court nomination hearings begin

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Tuesday, Sept. 10, the 254th day of 2024. There are 112 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Sept. 10, 1991, the Senate Judiciary Committee opened hearings on the nomination of Clarence Thomas to the U.S. Supreme Court. The proceedings would become a watershed moment in the discussion of sexual harassment when Anita Hill, a law professor who had previously worked under Thomas,

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came forward with allegations against him.

Also on this date:

In 1608, John Smith was elected president of the Jamestown colony council in Virginia.

In 1846, Elias Howe received a patent for his sewing machine.

In 1960, running barefoot, Abebe Bikila of Ethiopia won the Olympic marathon in Rome, becoming the first Black African to win Olympic gold.

In 1960, Hurricane Donna, a dangerous Category 4 storm blamed for 364 deaths, struck the Florida Keys.

In 1963, 20 Black students entered Alabama public schools following a standoff between federal authorities and Alabama Gov. George C. Wallace.

In 1979, four Puerto Rican nationalists imprisoned for a 1954 attack on the U.S. House of Representatives and a 1950 attempted killing of President Harry S. Truman were freed from prison after being granted clemency by President Jimmy Carter.

In 1987, Pope John Paul II arrived in Miami, where he was welcomed by President Ronald Reagan and first lady Nancy Reagan as he began a 10-day tour of the United States.

In 2005, teams of forensic workers and cadaver dogs fanned out across New Orleans to collect the corpses left behind by Hurricane Katrina.

In 2008, the Large Hadron Collider at the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) was powered up for the first time, successfully firing the first beam of protons through its 17-mile-long (27-kilometer-long) underground ring tunnel.

In 2022, King Charles III was officially proclaimed Britain's monarch in a pomp-filled ceremony two days after the death of his mother, Queen Elizabeth II.

Today's Birthdays: Scientist-author Jared Diamond is 87. Jazz/funk musician Roy Ayers is 84. Singer José Feliciano is 79. Former Canadian first lady Margaret Trudeau is 76. Political commentator Bill O'Reilly is 75. Rock musician Joe Perry (Aerosmith) is 74. Actor Amy Irving is 71. Sen. Cynthia Lummis, R-Wyo., is 70. Actor-director Clark Johnson is 70. Actor Kate Burton is 67. Film director Chris Columbus is 66. Actor Colin Firth is 64. Cartoonist Alison Bechdel is 64. Baseball Hall of Famer Randy Johnson is 61. Actor Raymond Cruz is 60. Rapper Big Daddy Kane is 56. Film director Guy Ritchie is 56. Actor Ryan Phillippe (FIHL'-ih-pee) is 50. Ballerina Misty Copeland is 42. Former MLB All-Star Joey Votto is 41.