

# Groton Daily Independent

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## Wednesday, Sept. 11

### PATRIOT DAY

School Breakfast: Oatmeal.

School Lunch: General's TSO Chicken, rice.

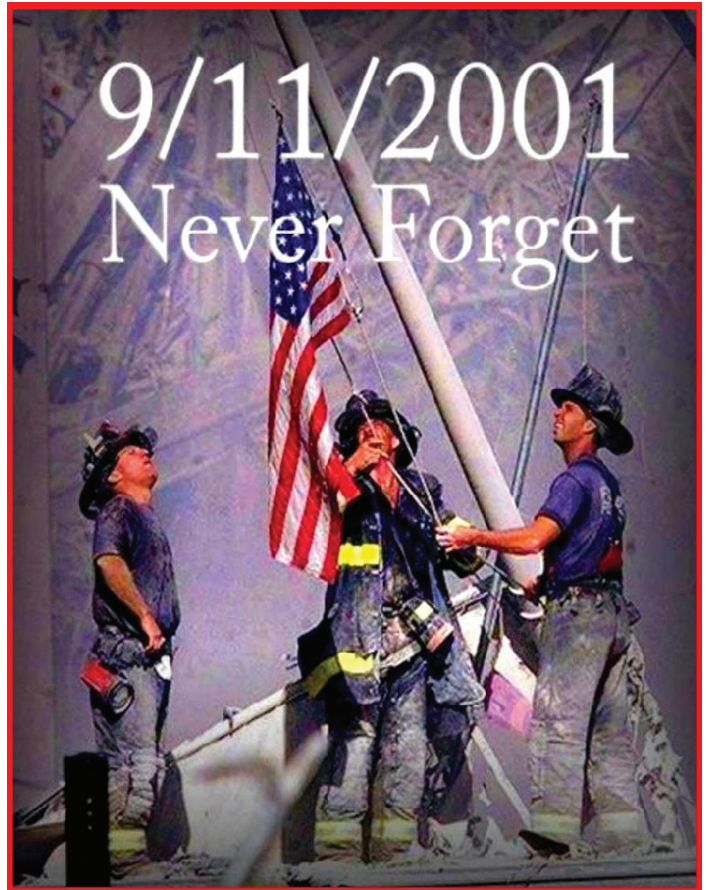
Senior Menu: Ham, au gratin potatoes, creamed cabbage, tropical fruit, whole wheat bread.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Confirmation, TBD; League, 6:30 p.m.

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PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445

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



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

## Thursday, Sept. 12

School Breakfast: Biscuits.

School Lunch: Hamburgers, fries.

Senior Menu: Chicken tetrazine, green beans, honey fruit salad, whole wheat bread.

Boys Golf hosts Invitational at Olive Grove Golf Course, 10 a.m.

Volleyball hosts Aberdeen Roncalli: 7th/C at 5 p.m.; 8th/JV at 6 p.m., varsity to follow.

Groton Lions Club Meeting, 104 N Main, 6 p.m.

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# 1440

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

## Presidential Debate Redux

Vice President Kamala Harris and former President Donald Trump went head-to-head in their first debate in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, last night. The ABC-hosted event was the second presidential debate of the 2024 election season but marked the first—and only scheduled—in-person encounter between the two presidential hopefuls following President Joe Biden's exit from the race.

The roughly 90-minute debate—moderated by David Muir and Linsey Davis—featured back-and-forth exchanges on issues, including the economy, abortion, immigration, and foreign policy. Trump and Harris also took jabs at each other; Trump criticized Harris for changing her stance on issues like fracking and joked he wanted to send her a "Make America Great Again" hat for her policy positions, while Harris commented on Trump's legal battles and criticized his rallies. The moderators appeared to only fact-check Trump, including when he falsely claimed immigrants were eating their neighbors' pets in Springfield, Ohio.

With eight weeks until Election Day, Harris is ahead of Trump by roughly one percentage point. Next up is a CBS-hosted vice presidential debate between Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz (D) and Ohio Sen. JD Vance (R), who will face off in New York City Oct. 1.

## America Remembers 9/11

The US will recognize the 23rd anniversary of the 9/11 attacks today, with a number of memorials being held around the country. In New York City, families will gather at the 9/11 Memorial Plaza to read aloud the names of the thousands of victims killed, followed by the annual Tribute in Light ceremony.

The day is the deadliest terrorist attack in US history, with 2,977 people directly killed—2,606 in the World Trade Center, 246 across four hijacked planes, and 125 at the Pentagon in Washington, DC. The remains of roughly 40% of the victims have not yet been identified. Over 25,000 people were injured in the aftermath, many suffering long-term health consequences from toxic contaminants and trauma.

The attacks caused protracted wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, which ended in 2021 and 2011, respectively. Roughly 15,000 US troops and contractors were killed across post-9/11 missions, with estimates projecting a total combined cost exceeding \$3T, with interest on the debt used to finance operations reaching \$6.5T by 2050.

## Polaris Dawn Blasts Off

SpaceX's Polaris Dawn mission successfully launched early yesterday morning from NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida. The mission aims to take its four-person civilian crew 870 miles above Earth—farther than any human has traveled since NASA's Apollo moon missions and more than three times higher than the International Space Station.

Made up of billionaire entrepreneur Jared Isaacman, retired Air Force Lt. Col. Scott Poteet, and SpaceX engineers Sarah Gillis and Anna Menon, the mission will attempt the first-ever civilian spacewalk Thursday conducted by two of the crew members. The crew will spend the next five days testing a Starlink laser-based communications system, medical technologies, and new SpaceX-designed spacesuits. See a history of spacesuit designs here.

The mission is the first of the Polaris Program, a series of three planned spaceflights with SpaceX aimed at advancing space technology and exploration for missions to the moon and Mars.

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## Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Mauricio Pochettino, former manager of Chelsea and Tottenham, named coach of US men's national soccer team; former coach Gregg Berhalter was fired in June after leading Team USA for nearly six years.

Sean "Diddy" Combs ordered to pay \$100M over alleged sexual assault at a 1997 party.

NFL reviewing allegations of sexual assault against Cleveland Browns quarterback Deshaun Watson, which were filed in a civil lawsuit Monday.

Tiger Woods and PGA Tour officials meet with members of Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund over potential \$1B investment from the PIF.

## Science & Technology

NASA greenlights launch of mission to search for signs of life on Jupiter's moon Europa; the largest spacecraft ever built for a planetary mission, the Europa Clipper could launch as early as Oct. 10.

Microsoft demonstrates logical operations using the highest number of error-corrected quantum computing bits to date.

Researchers discover multiple species of fungi, bacteria, and viruses floating in the air at altitudes close to 10,000 feet; may represent a new pathway for the regional spread of pathogens.

## Business & Markets

US stock markets close mixed (S&P 500 +0.5%, Dow -0.2%, Nasdaq +0.8%).

Oil prices drop more than 3% to lowest levels since 2021 following OPEC monthly report lowering growth forecast for 2024, 2025.

Federal Reserve proposes rules reducing by about half the amount of extra capital banks will be required to have on hand following threat of litigation; updated rules will be finalized in coming months, were developed in response to 2008 financial crisis.

EU's highest court upholds 2016 tax fines for Apple, Google.

Southwest Airlines chairman, six board directors to exit following pressure from Elliott Investment Management, which holds 10% stake; Elliott blames board for stock dropping over 50% in three years.

FAA investigates Delta Air Linesground collision in Atlanta; no injuries reported.

## Politics & World Affairs

Tropical Storm Francine turns into Category 1 hurricane, expected to strike Louisiana today as Category 2 hurricane; storm surge warnings also in effect for Texas.

Israeli airstrikes hit humanitarian zone in Gaza, killing at least 19 people and wounding at least 60 others, per Hamas-run Health Ministry; Israel says it targeted senior militants culpable in Oct. 7 attacks.

Ukraine targets inland Russia, including Moscow with 140 drones, killing one woman and sparking building fires in largest attack of its kind.

Artillery attack in southeastern Sudan market kills 21 people, wounds over 70 others, per doctors' union; attack comes after US- and Saudi-brokered peace talks fail to end civil war, government rejects international peacekeeping force.

9/11

## PATRIOT DAY

WE WILL NEVER FORGET



### Flags at Half-Staff in Honor of Patriot Day

PIERRE, S.D. – Governor Kristi Noem has ordered that flags be flown at half-staff statewide from sunrise until sundown on Wednesday, September 11, 2024, in honor of Patriot Day.





## Supporting arts education with one voice

By Jim Speirs, Executive Director, Arts South Dakota



South Dakota is fortunate that arts instructors have always joined together to enhance their skills and advocate for increased support for their disciplines. Arts South Dakota has recently collaborated with several of these arts educator associations to establish the South Dakota Arts Education Advocacy Cohort, providing a channel through which all of our state's arts education resources can speak with one voice. The cohort will promote a stronger, more effective message that will resonate with statewide constituent populations and the South Dakota legislature.

Focused on arts education advocacy at the state and local levels, this new cohort will ensure that arts education remains a priority for the students of South Dakota. Representatives of seven statewide arts educator groups are meeting under the coordination of retired Brookings music instructor Mary Cogswell to formulate a legislative agenda and establish priorities for the future. This unification gives arts educators the opportunity to study the big picture and create issues-oriented communications to inform the public and help shape the arts education policy for South Dakota.

This is an important step, and Arts South Dakota is excited about its potential for enhancing the impact of arts education and communicating the importance of maintaining a strong arts education component in every school in our state. Forming alliances and

working with organizations like the arts educator cohort is what Arts South Dakota was created to do. Strengthening advocacy efforts and focusing the energy of dedicated arts supporters is the most effective strategy for ensuring that creative learning and cultural understanding are part of the South Dakota curriculum for decades to come. We congratulate the volunteer members of the Arts Education Advocacy Cohort and commend them for their willingness to serve our state.

To learn more about the cohort and the advocacy efforts of Arts South Dakota, and add your voice to our advocacy efforts, go to [artssouthdakota.org](http://artssouthdakota.org)!

## Northern State University Education Programs and Residence Halls Ranked No. 1 in South Dakota

ABERDEEN, S.D. – Northern State University has been ranked No. 1 in South Dakota for both education programs and residence halls (dorms) in Niche’s 2025 rankings.

Niche, a platform for college reviews and rankings, bases its results on factors such as academic quality, student satisfaction, campus safety and housing options.

“At Northern, we live out our core values — discovery, community and integrity — with professors who take deep pride in teaching, experiential learning and mentoring students in student-led research, study abroad and community-based projects,” said Dr. Mike Wanous, provost and vice president for academic affairs. “Since Northern was established in 1901, educating teachers has been primary to our mission. The Millicent Atkins School of Education continues to offer an outstanding education to prepare teachers for our region, the state of South Dakota, our nation and the world.”

These rankings are reinforced by student reviews on niche.com. One student highlighted the education program: “Northern’s education program is truly exceptional. The faculty are deeply invested in your success and ensure you’re well-prepared for a career right after graduation.”

Dean of Students Sean Blackburn added, “We are pleased to be recognized as No. 1 for our residence halls and are grateful for the staff in the halls and our incredibly generous donors that have provided leading-edge residential facilities.”

A student praised the residence halls: “The dorms are fantastic! Spacious, clean and filled with everything you need to feel at home.”

This recognition underscores Northern’s dedication to providing top-tier education and exceptional student housing, solidifying its position as a leader in higher education in South Dakota.

“We are pleased to be recognized as the best in South Dakota for both education and our residence halls,” said Dr. Neal Schnoor, president of Northern State University. “Our faculty, staff, students and community work hard to create a welcoming and supportive environment, and these rankings confirm our commitment to excellence.”



## Hunger Action Month

Members of Enrich Groton gathered at their monthly board meeting held September 10th and acknowledged Hunger Action Day by wearing orange. Pictured here are Enrich Secretary April Abeln, Vice Chairman Topper Tastad, Treasurer Nancy Larsen, Kari Bartling, CCCT Manager Diane Warrington, Pantry Manager Pat Miller and Karyn Babcock (Missing is Chairman Lance Larsen). September is Hunger Action Month and Mayor Hanlon did a proclamation for Hunger Action Day held September 10th. (Courtesy Photo)

## September is **HUNGER ACTION MONTH**

Over 106,000 South Dakotans are food insecure. This month, take action to help us end hunger.

### Donate

As a Feeding South Dakota Partner Agency, we can stretch donated dollars further to fight hunger in our community.

### Build Awareness

Sept. 10th is  
Hunger Action Day

**Wear orange to bring awareness to the fight to end hunger.**

### Volunteer

Ask about how you can help, or visit:  
[feedingsouthdakota.org/volunteer](https://feedingsouthdakota.org/volunteer)  
to find more opportunities to support other programs.

Share how you take action to end hunger in South Dakota. Use [#ITookAction](https://twitter.com/ITookAction) and [#HungerActionMonth](https://twitter.com/HungerActionMonth) and tag us to join the nationwide conversation and inspire others.



@FeedingSD



@FeedingSD



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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

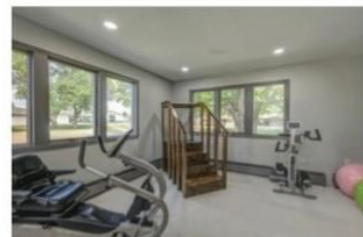
1106 N. 2nd Street, Groton, SD 57445

Pulled pork sandwich, chips & cookie provided to-go



### RSVP

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





## Football field improvements, potential funding issues discussed at school board meeting

by Elizabeth Varin

What is on your wish list for the football stadium in Groton?

Groton resident Tom Woods asked the Groton Area School District board if he and his wife Patti could explore grant opportunities that could be used to improve the school's football field and track facility.

The impetus for Woods was the crows nest, the area the announcer, media, coaches and others sit during the game. The building is located on the west side of the football field and track.

"Everybody knows what it looks like on the outside. We drive by it all the time," Woods said. "But if you haven't, I would like each and every one of you to go over to the crows nest, go inside, go up the ladder, lift the trap door and just look at where we're asking our volunteers as well as the people who visit our community to go to. ...To put it nicely, it's outlived its usefulness. And to put it bluntly, it's not safe.

"Today I'm here to ask for the board's blessing to research an upgrade to the football field to make it a multi-use facility, as well as the soccer field," he said. "I'm not asking you to approve anything. What I'm simply asking is that on behalf of the school district, my wife, Patti, and I be given permission to research and organize the costs, to apply for grants for improvements. If the board decides to move forward with upgrading those types of things, my wife and I would also like to volunteer to spearhead fundraising support for that as well."

Woods cited some grant opportunities, including one through T-Mobile with a deadline to apply in early October.

Woods said his vision would be to put together a wish list of what the board and community want at the field, get an estimated cost for those projects and see what funding opportunities are out there. These projects could be done through grants and fundraising, with a minimal impact on taxpayers and school funding.

Business Manager Becky Hubsch asked Woods to make sure and read the fine print in the grant applications. From her experience writing grant applications, there are some pitfalls like matching funds or funding only available to 501c3 nonprofit groups (the school district is not a 501c3 entity, she added).

Board member Marty Weismantel told Woods to make sure school administrators are involved in this process. He also advised that people don't up Woods' offer to climb into the crows nest.

Board Member Deb Gengerke added that she likes the idea of a wish list for the facility to get the ball rolling.

"When you see the whole package number, it's staggering," she said. "But when you break it down... I think that's helpful too."

Board President Grant Rix told Woods that the board seemed to be good with Woods moving forward with the project.

Woods added, "for anything to get done, it takes somebody to want to do it. ... Any extracurricular activities that we can provide these kids so it enhances their learning experience is nothing but positive."

### Potentially funding impacts of IM 28 discussed

The district is already feeling a pinch due to lower-than-expected enrollment.

Business Manager Becky Hubsch reported the district is down 22 students that officials were expecting to enter kindergarten. That has affected state aid funds, with a projected \$119,000 drop from the district's expected state aid funding.

There are also some concerns for next year, Superintendent Joe Schwan said. The district is looking at whether a low junior kindergarten enrollment figure will be a low kindergarten enrollment number for next year.

Board member Marty Weismantel said declining enrollment is a statewide issue.

Board President Grant Rix added that with this enrollment drop and potential funding issues if Initiated

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Measure 28 passes, it's a good thing the district has the opt-out approved earlier this year to fall back on.

In other action:

- Transportation Director Damian Bahr reported how the current bus and vehicle fleet is doing. Activity trips are going to be challenging this year, he said. It would be nice to get driver exclusively for activities. And the district would help with any training or certifications needed for the position, he added. Bahr said he hopes to find a new bus for the district to purchase, and then to start a rotation of purchasing buses until the fleet is in better shape. A few of the buses the district has with MaxxForce engines are nearing 200,000 miles, and that type of engine gives out around that point.

- District administration brought up some issues with an upcoming initiated measure. IM 28, which would prohibit a state sales tax on anything sold for human consumption except for a few exceptions, would potentially be problematic for school districts if there is no replacement of those funds. The state Legislative Research Council has indicated that if the measure passes in November, the state would have to make some big funding cuts, and that could mean a 10 percent decrease in state funding for school districts. There would be "no way to recover that revenue," he said. He added he will come back to the board at its next meeting with information on the potential impacts specific to the district.

- The board's next meeting takes place at 7 a.m. Tuesday, October 15.

- Food Service Director Brandon Clocksene told the board there has already been a beef donation to the school, as well as cucumbers from the farm to school program. Food services is working to get a salad bar at the high school, which would be available every day of the week. The department is shorthanded, but the number of students getting breakfast and lunch at school seems to be staying the same. The board asked about what types of produce the district accepts as donations, and Clocksene said any vegetable as long as it's unwashed and unprocessed. Those who would like to donate can reach out to Brandon. Clocksene@k12.sd.us or bring them to the school. Clocksene pointed out that any time the district receives a donation of enough cucumbers, the school saves about \$40 instead of buying them from a supplier. "It's not making a big dent, but it's helping out."

- Maintenance Director Ryan Scepaniak reported that work over the summer went well. Some broken windows are being taken care of, and the district's lawn mower is not the best.

- The district is exploring whether to switch to LED lighting at the football field. Superintendent Joe Schwan told the board about some electrical issues impacting the east side light poles. Fixing those issues is estimated to cost \$12,000, so he said he will look at whether it is more prudent to switch to LED lighting instead of repairing the issues and having to switch to LED later on.

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## Groton Area - Junior Varsity - Tigers Football Stats

September 9, 2024

Questions call Tom Woods – Groton Volunteer Stat Guy 605-397-7565

Location: Langford, SD

	<u>Quarter Scores</u>			<u>Final</u>	
Groton Area	7	7	12	8	- 34
Webster Area	0	0	0	0	- 0

### Groton Area Tigers

### Webster Area Bearcats

**First Downs:**        8

**First Downs:**        4

**Rushing:**    Team Carries -    24  
                          Team Yards -        54

**Rushing:**    Team Carries -    20  
                          Team Yards -        79

#### Individual Rushing Leaders

Player	Carries	- Yards
Skyler Godel	11	- 33
Ryder Schelle	6	- 35
Braydn Small	1	- -7
Alex Abeln	1	- -7

#### Individual Rushing Leaders

Player	Carries	- Yards
Henry Witt	14	- 59

#### **Team Passing:**

Completed 6 of 9 for 181 yards 3 TD 0 Int  
Individual:

Bradyn Small 5 of 7 for 151 yards 2 TD 0 Int  
 Alex Abeln 1 of 2 for 30 yards 1 TD 0 Int

#### **Team Passing:**

Completed 0 of 4 Attempts

#### **Receiving:**

Lincoln Krause        - 3 catches for 71 yds  
 Ryder Schelle        - 2 catches for 69 yds  
 Skyler Godel         - 1 catch    for 31 yds  
 Ben Hoeft             - 1 catch    for 10 yds

#### **Receiving:**

**Fumbles:** Had 0 Lost 0

**Fumbles:** Had 1 Lost 1 (Groton Returned for TD)

**Penalties:** 1 for 15 Yards Lost

**Penalties:** 4 for 40 Yards Lost

#### **Defensive Leaders:** (tackles, sacks, fumbles recovered, Int's)

Gavin Kroll            3 tackles  
 Ashton Holmes        3 tackles  
 Isaiah Scepaniak     2 tackles  
 Skyler Godel         2 tackles  
 Lincoln Krause        2 tackles  
 Braeden Flichs        2 tackles  
 Brysen Sandness     2 tackles  
 Landon Smith         2 tackles  
 Brody Lord            1 tackle (1 sack -5)  
 Alex Abeln            2 tackles  
 Brysen Sadness       2 tackles  
 Gunner Hardy         1 tackle  
 Ryder Schelle         1 tackle  
 Ben Hoeft             1 tackle - John Bisbee 1 tackle

#### **Defensive Leaders:** (tackles, sacks, fumbles recovered, Int's)

John Sonstebo        5 tackles  
 Sean Sichmeller     3 tackles  
 Henry Witt            3 tackles

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**SCORING:** Groton Area 34 vs 0 Webster Area

September 9, 2024 - At Langford

## Junior Varsity Football

### FIRST QUARTER

Time	Points		Play
2:29	7	Groton Area	Lincoln Krause 8 yard pass from Bradyn Small Joao Nunes extra point kick good

### SECOND QUARTER

Time	Points		Play
:11	7	Groton Area	Skyler Godel 14 yard pass from Brandyn Small Joao Nunes extra point kick good

### THIRD QUARTER

Time	Points		Play
1:41	6	Groton Area	Skyler Godel 10 yard run Alejandro Jativa extra point kick no good
1:31	6	Groton Area	Brody Lord 25 yard fumble return Alejandro Jativa extra point kick no good

### FOURTH QUARTER

Time	Points		Play
1:54	8	Groton Area	Ryder Schelle 6 yard pass from Alex Abeln Joao Nunes 2 pt catch – pass from Alex Abeln





## On Call with the Prairie Doc Kicks Off 23rd Season on September 12th

On Call with the Prairie Doc, a trusted health education television show on SDPB, is excited to announce the start of its 23rd season on September 12th. The show, which provides valuable health information based on science and built on trust, has been a staple in the South Dakota community for over two decades.

Hosted by Dr. Andrew Ellsworth, Dr. Jill Kruse, Dr. Debra Johnston, Dr. Kelly Evans-Hullinger, On Call with the Prairie Doc features expert guests discussing a wide range of health topics and answering viewer questions. The show aims to empower viewers with reliable information to make informed decisions about their health and well-being.

"We are thrilled to kick off our 23rd season of On Call with the Prairie Doc," said Board President and co-founder Joanie Holm. "Over the years, our show has been a valuable resource for the community, and we look forward to continuing to provide trusted health information to our viewers."

The new season of On Call with the Prairie Doc will premiere on September 12th at 7pm Central on SDPB and streaming on the Prairie Doc Facebook page. Viewers can tune in weekly to learn about the latest health trends, medical advancements, and wellness tips.

For more information about On Call with the Prairie Doc and to view past episodes, please visit [www.prairedoc.org](http://www.prairedoc.org).

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## Banners going up



**Welcome banners are getting hung in the Groton SD Community! Banners will be placed along Hwy 12 and Main Street with assistance from the Groton Electric Department. The Chamber is fundraising for this project by selling apparel until November 22nd. Inquire at City Hall if interested in supporting this project!**



## Netters tame Bearcats in three sets



**Chesney Weber**  
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)

Groton Areas volleyball team battled a three-set win over Webster Area in action played Tuesday in Groton.

The first set was tied six times before the Bearcats opened up a five-point lead, including a 20-15 lead. Webster Area trailed, 24-19, when Coach Chelsea Hanson called a time out. "I told the girls that there was nothing to lose and to relax and play. If we lost, we have more sets to play, but I wanted them to go into the second set on a strong momentum." The Lady Tigers took it to hear and scored the seven points to pull out the 26-24 win.

The second set was tied four times and there were two lead changes before Groton Area got the upper hand and led it, 11-7,

and opened up a 16-10 lead. Then Webster Area scored six straight points to make it a one point game, 17-16. Groton went back on top, 22-17, but Webster Area battled back to within one, 23-22, and 24-23, but Groton Area went on to win, 25-23.

The Tigers scored seven straight points early in the third set, taking command early and went on to win, 25-12.

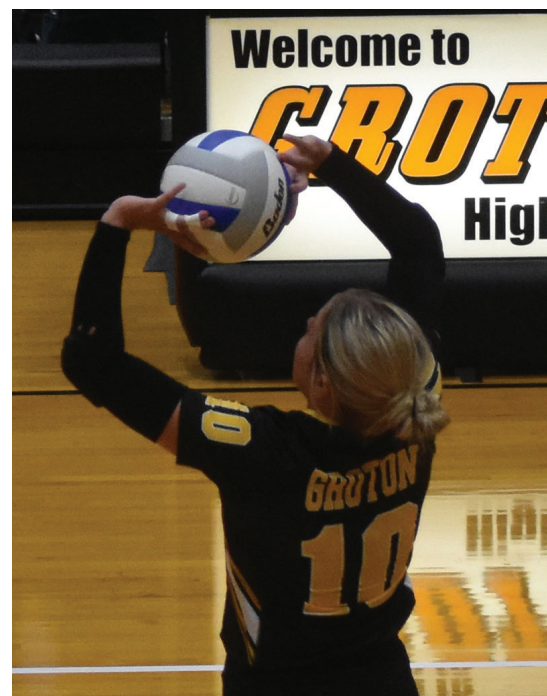
Chesney Weber had the game winning kill in both the first and second sets, and the game winning point in the third set with an ace serve, and led the Tigers with 18 kills (42-47), 11 digs, 10 assists, two ace serves (11-11) and a block. Jaedyn Penning had 11 kills (28-33). "It's unheard of to have two players in double figures in a three set match," Hanson said. Rylee Dunker had five kills (15-19) and two blocks. Jerica Locke had three ace serves (15-16), 26 digs and one kill. Elizabeth Flihs had 23 assists and three ace serves (12-12). Laila Roberts had an ace serve and 11 digs. Taryn Traphagen and Faith Traphagen each had three kills and Kella Tracy had one kill and one block.

Allison Case each had four kills and 10 digs for Webster Area, Jersey Johnson had 20 digs, Malory Steiner had four kills and one block, Harley Johnson had three ace serves and Karli Sannes had two ace serves.

The game was broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by Agtegra, Avantara Groton, Bierman Farm Service, BK Custom T's & More, Blocker Construction, Dacotah Bank, Groton Ag Partners, Groton Chamber, Groton Ford, John Sieh Agency, Jungle Lanes & Lounge, Krueger Brothers, R&M Farms/Rix Farms, The Meat-house in Andover.



**Sydney Locke**  
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



**Elizabeth Flihs**  
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



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Groton Area won the junior varsity match, 25-23 and 25-17. McKenna Tietz and Liby Althoff each had had five kills, Talli Wright had four kills and one ace serve, Sydney Locke had four ace serves, Kella Tracy had two kills, Makenna Krause had three kills and three ace serves and Emerlee Jones had two kills.

Chloe Mammenga led Webster Area with one kill and two ace serves.

The game was broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM sponsored by Adam and Nicole Wright.

Webster Area won the C match, 25-22, 12-25 and 15-13.



**Faith Traphagen**  
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



**Jaedyn Penning**  
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



**Jerica Locke**  
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



**Laila Roberts**  
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



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**Rylee Dunker**  
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



**Kella Tracy**  
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



**Taryn Traphagen**  
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



**Celebration after the win**  
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



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## James Valley Christian beats Groton Area, 3-2

Groton Area left two points on the field due to technicalities and James Valley Christian went on to win the boys soccer game, 3-2.

The first point the Tigers game up was in the first minute of the game on a penalty kick. The kick was made and it was good; however, the official whistle was not blown so it had to be done over. The second kick did not go in.

The Vikings were quick to respond and scored less than a minute later when Keeghann Hood scored. The Vikings scored again less than a minute later when Isaac Wipf scored. Four minutes later, Kolby VanDerWerff scored for James Valley Christian and it was 3-0, which was the half time score.

Karson Zak would score for the Tigers with 31:32 left in the game to make it 3-1. The Tigers scored again with 19:34 left when the ball bounced off of Easton Weber with Logan Olson tapping the ball in to make it 3-2. Groton Area scored with 12:06 left; however, an off-side call was made and the goal was not good. James Valley Christian would go on to win, 3-2.



**Axel Abeln**  
(Courtesy Photo)



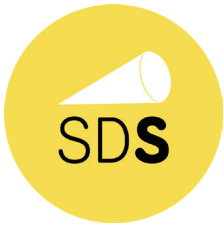
**Karson Zak, Axel Abeln, Logan Olson**  
(Courtesy Photo)



**Easton Weber**  
(Courtesy Samantha Weber)



**Jace Johnson**  
(Courtesy Samantha Weber)



## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

### South Dakota Board of Regents sues NCAA over proposed athlete pay settlement

**SDSU, USD stand to lose a combined \$1 million a year, Attorney General Marty Jackley alleges**

BY: JOHN HULT - SEPTEMBER 10, 2024 6:10 PM

The NCAA unfairly favors large universities and disfavors female competitors with a proposed settlement that would regulate payments for student-athletes, according to South Dakota Attorney General Marty Jackley.

He filed a lawsuit Tuesday in Brookings County against the collegiate sports governing body. Jackley is representing the Board of Regents, which is pursuing the matter on behalf of the state's two largest public universities, South Dakota State University in Brookings and the University of South Dakota in Vermillion. In an interview, Jackley said that together, the schools stand to lose around \$1 million in NCAA revenue each year for 10 years under the settlement proposal.

South Dakota is an ideal venue for the legal challenge, he said. The state has none of the large schools the lawsuit claims will benefit unfairly under the settlement, but it does have two successful Division I athletics programs that would see fewer dollars from the NCAA under its terms.

That doesn't put a combined challenge from multiple states – and perhaps a move to federal court – outside the realm of possibility.

"I can tell you that the complaint we filed today has been provided to other attorneys general, and I've been on the phone with other attorneys general all week," Jackley said.

The NCAA did not immediately reply to a request for comment Tuesday.

#### Settlement hit snag prior to filing of SD lawsuit

The NCAA proposed the settlement in May to end three class action lawsuits over athlete compensation. The May settlement's origins can be traced back to a 2021 decision from the U.S. Supreme Court, which sided with a lower court in its conclusion that the NCAA's prohibition on athlete compensation was a viola-



**The University of South Dakota football team on the field during an Oct. 28, 2023, game in Vermillion.** (Courtesy of USD)



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tion of antitrust laws.

The NCAA had previously held that student athletes could not profit from their name, image or likeness (NIL), even as the NCAA and schools themselves reaped the financial rewards of broadcast deals, advertising and merchandising.

Even after the Supreme Court ruling, the NCAA barred institutions from paying student athletes directly, rather than through benefits like scholarships.

The proposed settlement would allow schools to pay students up to a limit, but it's yet to be approved. The agreement has been on hold since last week, when a judge in Northern California told negotiators to "go back to the drawing board" to address the NCAA's desire to restrict "booster collectives."

Collectives emerged to connect college athletes with NIL opportunities in the absence of direct payments from schools. South Dakota's Division I schools have collectives supported by their athletic programs but officially independent of them.

U.S. District Judge Claudia Wilken declined to offer preliminary approval to the settlement after a hearing last Thursday, in part because it would allow the NCAA to restrict the ways collectives can make payments. Judge Wilken wanted that part of the agreement removed, according to reporting from ESPN, but the NCAA argued that the restrictions are central to the agreement.

## **South Dakota concerns: Fairness, breach of financial duty**

Concerns for smaller schools will remain regardless of the outcome of those settlement talks, Jackley said. That's because, he argues, the NCAA's framework for settling the case violates its fiduciary duties to schools outside the "Power Four" conferences like the Big 10.

The proposal sets aside \$2.8 billion to compensate former and current athletes. NCAA reserves would pay around \$1.15 billion; the remaining \$1.65 billion would come through reduced NCAA disbursements to the organization's 1,100 member universities over the next decade.

There are 365 Division I schools. According to the NCAA, they split around \$600 million of the disbursed revenue. In the settlement, the 68 schools in the Power Four – a group that includes schools like Alabama or Texas A&M that saw the greatest financial benefit from the work of amateur athletes – would cover around 40% of reductions over the next decade. The other 60% of the lost revenue burden would be shouldered by the remaining Division I schools.

South Dakota schools fall into that second category, but the schools aren't alone in their concerns. Administrators of smaller schools have spent months pondering how the settlement might affect their operations. Some even said they might need to consider dropping down to Division II to cope financially, according to reporting from the New York Times-owned outlet The Athletic.

In July, Jackley told another sports news outlet called Sportico he was considering a lawsuit in the interest of South Dakota's two Division I universities.

The lawsuit argues that the settlement would do unjust financial damage to smaller schools. It also alleges that the agreement violates federal Title IX rules on equitable treatment for male and female athletes by funneling 90% of the payments to male athletes, and that the NCAA violated its own constitution by entering into a settlement without a two-thirds vote of its member schools.

Jackley competed in track and cross country for the South Dakota Mines while pursuing his undergraduate degree in engineering.

"As a former college student-athlete, I believe strongly in a system that presents our athletes with opportunities to compete and treats all of our athletes fair and equal," Jackley said in a news release on the lawsuit. "I am disappointed that our South Dakota athletes and universities are paying the price for a settlement that did not involve any of our conduct."

If the settlement falls apart and a jury hands a win to the plaintiffs in the class action lawsuit, Jackley said, the NCAA decisions that inspired the lawsuit will still need to be addressed.

"I'm open to conversation with them, but they need to fix two things, and it's not the one or the other," Jackley said. "They need to fix the treatment of the smaller schools, which include SDSU and USD, and



they need to fix the treatment of female student athletes.”

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

## FEMA approves \$3.5 million for Union County, which includes McCook Lake

**Agency's aid to South Dakota following late-June storms totals over \$6 million; SBA distributes \$2.5 million in loans**

**BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - SEPTEMBER 10, 2024 5:29 PM**



**A June 25, 2024, view of flood damage that happened the night of June 23-24 at McCook Lake in southeastern South Dakota.** (Cour-

tesy of Union County Emergency Management)

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has approved 283 applications totaling \$3.5 million in assistance for Union County residents, which includes the McCook Lake area devastated by a record flood on June 23.

The county's aid makes it the largest recipient in the state following late June's severe storms across southeastern South Dakota. As of Sept. 5, FEMA had approved 1,022 applications worth more than \$6 million in aid to South Dakotans in response. More funds could still be distributed; the application period doesn't close until mid-October.

McCook Lake homeowner Linda Cutsinger had to gut her entire home due to the flood, leaving only a frame. She had no flood insurance and said the FEMA aid she received is less than the

\$42,500 cap for home repairs, which would not cover the repairs even if she received the full amount.

"You never get as much as you need," Cutsinger said. "You're still going to be in the hole, without a doubt. I'm definitely going to go with an appeal."

Cutsinger's neighbor across the street, Morgan Speichinger, suffered total destruction of her home. She had no flood insurance either. Her family received \$42,500 for home repairs, \$2,000 for personal belongings and \$750 to relocate an electrical panel and water heater to a safer location.

"The process, once they got here, was pretty quick," she said. The Speichingers have been living with relatives, but are looking at temporarily renting until they figure out what's next – which she said FEMA will help cover for the first 18 months.

Speichinger said her family also qualified for two loans offered by the U.S. Small Business Administration's Office of Disaster Recovery and Resilience: a 30-year loan of \$25,000 at 2.688% without the requirement to get flood insurance, or \$73,000 if they obtain additional hazard insurance. No payments have to be made on either for the first year. The family has not yet determined their best path forward.

Speichinger and Cutsinger both said they did not have flood insurance because they're not in an area designated by FEMA as requiring it.

Claudia Anderson is a spokesperson with the SBA. She said the administration has approved over \$2.5 million in disaster loans for South Dakota residents and businesses. The application deadline for SBA disaster loans is Oct. 15.

"Don't self-determine whether or not you're eligible," Anderson said. "It's really important for everyone to come in and apply. We understand you were just in a disaster; we're not going to hold a bad credit score against you, or something like that."

Tony Mayne is a spokesperson with FEMA Region 8, which includes South Dakota. He said individuals impacted by late June's severe storms in Davison, Lincoln, Turner and Union counties can still register by calling 800-621-3362, visiting DisasterAssistance.gov, using the FEMA app, or visiting a Disaster Recovery Center.

Mayne emphasized that speaking with FEMA representatives during a visit did not automatically register individuals for assistance.

"Those people still have had to register with FEMA to be eligible for disaster-related assistance," Mayne said.

Federal funding is also available to state, tribal and eligible local governments and certain private nonprofit organizations in 25 counties, on a cost-sharing basis for emergency work and the repair or replacement of damaged facilities.

Meanwhile, South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks announced Tuesday the reopening of McCook Lake. The lake will have a no-wake zone across the entire waterbody.

"There is still a significant amount of debris in the lake itself," said Sam Schelhaas, law enforcement chief. "We want to open the water with a no-wake zone, which will allow individuals to continue clean up and dock retrieval from this event."

*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.*

## Children in detention center learn about 'fixing our mistakes' in art and life

### Art show highlights Minnehaha County nonprofit's program

BY: JOHN HULT - TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 10, 2024 1:03 PM

SIoux FALLS — It's a quarter to 5 on a Wednesday afternoon, and art instructor Lisa Brunick wants her students to expel some energy through color and short bursts of chaos.

Grab two crayons, she says, and hold them in your fist facing downward, "like you're 2," over your sheet of white paper.

"Now scribble. Hard and fast. Go. Go, go, go!" Brunick says, watching the clock as 10 seconds tick by. "Now ... stop!"

The students repeat the process four times, each time swapping out the colors in their fists.

Then Brunick tells them to tear up the white paper and reassemble their work onto another sheet of paper — like a puzzle, she says, but don't let the pieces touch. The gaps are to be filled with gold paint.



It's a lesson inspired by "kintsugi," a Japanese method of pottery repair that uses gold instead of plaster to make broken art more beautiful than it may have been before.

The term's literal translation, she tells her pupils, is "gold joinery."

"It's a process of fixing our mistakes," Brunick says. "Instead of saying 'I blew it, that's the end of it,' we can say 'I blew it. How can I make it better?'"

Kintsugi is just one lesson in Brunick's yearlong curriculum, but only Brunick will make it a whole year.

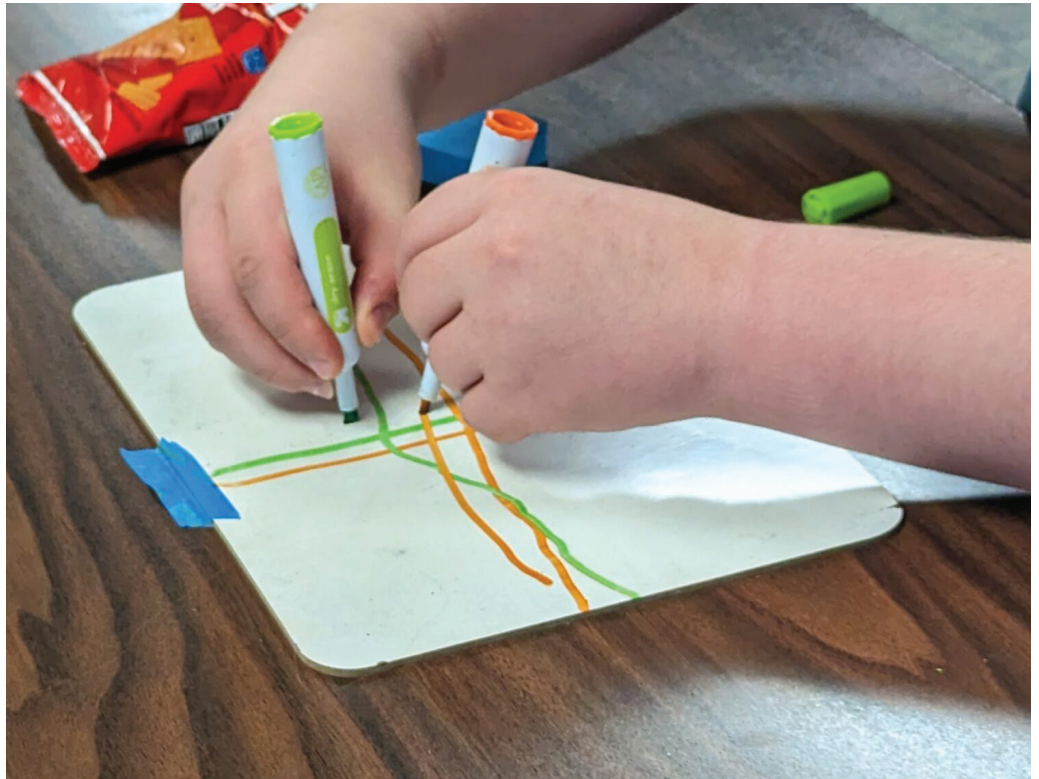
The 30-year educator with art therapy training leads courses at the Minnehaha County Juvenile Detention Center in Sioux Falls, one of South Dakota's largest facilities for young offenders. It houses kids from more than two dozen counties in the state's southeastern quadrant, usually for days or weeks, not full semesters.

Brunick uses a curriculum where each lesson builds on the last, but the lessons are also self-contained enough to work for a transient population that may only attend a course or two.

"You don't need to do the full course to learn something," Brunick said.

Brunick and another teacher named Amanda Berger work through a nonprofit organization called Journey of Hope, founded four years ago by the family of a young man who struggled with mental illness and addiction.

On Thursday night from 5-7 p.m., the public will have an opportunity to see the work of the itinerant young artists when Rehfeld's Underground in downtown Sioux Falls hosts a one-night exhibition called "A Journey Through Hope."



**A student in an art-as-therapy class at the Minnehaha County Juvenile Detention Center in Sioux Falls works through an exercise.**

(John Hult/South Dakota Searchlight)

## All-volunteer support

In a criminal justice setting, structured arts coursework falls under a category of programming called "evidence-based," meaning it's known to reduce the risk of re-offending by kids who take part.

But the center in Sioux Falls doesn't have the money to pay for it.

Nor can it pay for animal meet-and-greet visits with staff from the Great Plains Zoo, financial literacy courses from Lutheran Social Services, nutrition courses from South Dakota State University or talks on oral health from Delta Dental.

It's only through the generosity of the community that the center can offer anything more than regular school coursework for every kid and mental health counseling for the ones at risk of self-harm, according to the center's assistant director, Nate Ellens.

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When vetted volunteers and nonprofit organizations want to help without sending the county a bill, Elens said, "it's an easy yes."

The yearlong curriculum from Journey of Hope's instructors and its goal-oriented approach are particularly welcome.

It may be rare for kids to stay at the center for an entire school year, but many of the kids who wind up detained stay longer than they used to.

"We've had an increase in youth charged as an adult that are here for an extended period of time," Elens said. "So we really do have programming needs, but we don't have a budget for it."

Sioux Falls isn't alone in its limits, said Center Director Jamie Gravett.

Federal regulations require at least one staff member for every eight detainees in juvenile facilities, which means Gravett needs more staff on hand than he would if he ran an adult facility. It costs more than \$400 per day to house a juvenile, he said, with 70-80% of that money going to salaries. The center is also building a replacement facility, which will add nearly \$100 a day to the cost the center charges its partner counties for room and board.

Gravett isn't thrilled about the limits to programming for the kids in his care, but he also knows property taxpayers aren't thrilled about their rising bills – in Sioux Falls or other cities with large juvenile facilities, like Rapid City or Pierre. He doesn't love that the only counseling he can offer to kids who aren't in immediate danger comes from Volunteers of America counselors who offer their time for free.

Lawmakers tried unsuccessfully to address rising property taxes during the 2024 session, but they did agree to conduct a summer study on the issue. The emphasis of those discussions is property tax relief.

"I haven't found anyone yet who's happy to see their property tax bills go up, and I can't blame them," said Gravett.

## Gaps in care

Journey of Hope's mission is to fill in the gaps created by tight budgets.

Kari Palmer and her husband founded the group in 2020 after their son died of an alcohol overdose. He'd struggled with addiction and depression, and at one point spent six months at the JDC in Sioux Falls.

The group's goal is to support "the whole person," both in and outside of correctional settings by offering, at no cost to taxpayers, what overburdened institutions can't.

Her son's experiences serve as a guide. He left the Juvenile Detention Center without basic hygiene items, for example, which got her thinking about the other kids who'd been there.

"We would provide that for him, but so many other people don't have family there because bridges have been burned or whatever," Palmer said. "We recognized that there was a much greater need in our community."

That's why the group's first effort was to organize the delivery of hygiene kits to kids leaving the center, but also to people in parking lots or approached by volunteers with Church on the Street, a group that ministers to the homeless.

"It's a bag to say, 'You know what? The community is here to support you. Here's something to start your journey with. You're not alone in this,'" Palmer said.

Art as therapy, Palmer said, is a way to offer community support to those who find themselves inside institutions, often after experiencing trauma at a young age.

As with the hygiene kits, the idea was inspired by her son's experience at the center. Inside an institution, she said, there are emotional needs that go beyond the basics of survival.

"At his wake, I learned from people that he would play his guitar and he would sing," she said. "It would just bring them hope on their journey, and just bring them a level of peace. And I wanted that. I wanted that for people."

Palmer wanted something "a little more in-depth," which is why she reached out to Brunick, a longtime art teacher and certified art therapist. What started with Brunick and Berger at the center has since expanded to include biweekly yoga instruction there. Another instructor leads singing bowl sessions at the Glory

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House, a halfway house in Sioux Falls about a block from the Juvenile Detention Center, twice a month.

## Rehabilitation useful for juveniles

Palmer has some grant applications in review that she hopes will open up more expansive programming. Ideally, the group would be able to deliver the arts curriculum to families at home after a juvenile's release.

It's important to fill a child's incarcerated days with more positive influences and fewer hours in cells, she said, but also to continue to support them after release.

If kids are detained, Palmer said the community should be asking "how are we helping them, as a society, to heal?"

Palmer worked with University of South Dakota Criminal Justice Professor Jenna Borseth on those grant applications.

Regarding therapeutic art programs for juveniles, "there's a lot of research that has shown they can be quite effective," Borseth said, even though there are some questions as to whether it's the arts aspect or the individualized attention that helps.

"It might be that really pouring time into people and giving them resources and giving them tools to deal with their anger, and maybe a class focused on managing anger or understanding empathy, could be equally effective," Borseth said.

Kids in South Dakota tend to reoffend at lower rates than those in other states, she said, but there are areas for improvement. There are disparities in outcomes for Native American children, for example, who are more likely to reoffend than kids of any other race in the state.

Targeted programs with cultural elements could make a difference, Borseth said.

"There is a growing body of research that really suggests just taking any effective programming and throwing it at that population specifically is not optimal," she said.

Course completion rates are another wrinkle in South Dakota's juvenile offender population. Kids in the state are less likely to finish evidence-based treatment than kids in other states, she said. More incentives to keep kids involved in programming, such as sentence reductions or clearing a child's record for completion, could be worth a look.

"Things like that can provide some opportunity for them to engage in the programming that we know is going to help them in the long run, but that they might not buy into right now," Borseth said.

## From the center to the gallery

Ellens can't say he's seen dramatic changes in the kids specifically because of the art classes. It's not as though students return to their rooms as obsessive sketch artists or suddenly become model residents after a few sessions.

What Ellens does see are improvements in their coping skills. Kids who practice using the techniques they learn in the arts course can turn to them to handle their emotions in difficult moments, he said.

"A lot of the kids do great until something doesn't go their way," Ellens said. "And that's where programming like art comes in. It's the connections, the skills they learn in there, the connections they have to the facilitators, and then just art in general being a release for them."

Brunick knows not every lesson will land. Some students struggle with certain prompts and crumple up their work in frustration; others stay quiet and barely engage during their initial lessons before opening up.

After the first of her two sessions on tearing paper and putting it back together, Brunick noticed that one young man struggled to see the purpose of the exercise. He loves to draw and has talent, she said, but he's typically meticulous and precise with each stroke.

"Oftentimes that's a red flag that their life is out of control, it's full of chaos, and they just need to pull it together. They want desperately to have control. They need to have that control, like 'give me a pencil and a piece of paper any day,'" Brunick said. "So being this loose like this, it takes courage."

Brunick wants visitors to Thursday's art show to see that courage, even though they won't see it on the faces of the artists. To protect their privacy, no artist names will be attached to their work.



Which is not to say the students don't appreciate the attention. When Brunick first pitched the idea of an art show, she said one boy "just about jumped out of his chair."

"He was like 'yes, we want people in the community to know we are not just criminals in here, we're people with potential and talents, and we want to show them that,'" she said.

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

## Trump urges shutdown unless Congress passes bill requiring ID to register to vote

### Thune critical of House GOP's six-month stopgap spending bill

BY: JENNIFER SHUTT - SEPTEMBER 10, 2024 5:47 PM



**Republican presidential candidate and former U.S. President Donald Trump speaks at the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) at the Gaylord National Resort Hotel And Convention Center on Feb. 24, 2024, in National Harbor, Maryland.** (Anna Moneymaker/Getty Images)

WASHINGTON — Congress is stumbling toward another government shutdown deadline at the end of the month with no clear plan in place to enact a bipartisan stopgap spending bill — and some new meddling by the Republican presidential nominee.

House Republicans have, so far, taken the go-at-it-alone approach by scheduling a vote Wednesday on a six-month continuing resolution, despite that legislation lacking the votes needed to pass both chambers.

President Joe Biden has also issued a veto threat of the bill, ensuring it has no path to becoming law.

Meanwhile, Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump sought to stir the pot Tuesday by calling on his party to force a shutdown if Democrats don't accept the GOP's inclusion of a separate bill that would require an ID to register to vote.

"If Republicans in the House, and Senate, don't get absolute assurances on Election Security, THEY SHOULD, IN NO WAY, SHAPE, OR FORM, GO FORWARD WITH A CONTINUING RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET," Trump wrote on social media.

House Republican leaders have included a bill that requires proof of citizenship to register to vote in federal elections in their stopgap spending bill. It is already illegal for people who are not citizens to vote in federal elections.

The original voting bill, H.R.8281, was first introduced by Texas GOP Rep. Chip Roy, a member of the far-right House Freedom Caucus. It passed 221-198 in July, with five Democrats voting with Republicans, but stalled in the Senate.

The White House rejected that sidetrack in a Statement of Administration Policy released earlier this week, writing that the "unrelated cynical legislation... would do nothing to safeguard our elections, but would

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make it much harder for all eligible Americans to register to vote and increase the risk that eligible voters are purged from voter rolls.”

Congress must pass some sort of spending bill before the end of the month to avoid a partial government shutdown beginning just weeks before the November elections.

## Senators react

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer pressed for congressional leaders to get in a room and negotiate a bipartisan agreement during a press conference Tuesday.

“The bottom line is, we want a bipartisan negotiation,” Schumer said. “We will sit down and do a bipartisan negotiation, and that’s the only way to pass this.”

Schumer laid the responsibility for calling such a meeting at the feet of House Speaker Mike Johnson, a Louisiana Republican.

Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell said during a separate press conference he’s reserving judgment on the House stopgap spending bill until he sees whether it will actually pass that chamber.

“I think we first have to see what the House sends us, and then, of course, how to handle that will be up to the majority leader,” the Kentucky Republican said. “But the first step ought to be what comes out of the House. And I think we don’t know right now.”

McConnell said there shouldn’t be a government shutdown under any circumstances, clearly rejecting Trump’s calls for one.

“A government shutdown is always a bad idea,” he said.

## Thune cites predictability for military

Senate Republican Whip John Thune, of South Dakota, was critical of the House GOP’s six-month stopgap spending bill, which would likely push off negotiations on the dozen annual government funding bills until early next year.

That could have a detrimental effect on the Senate vetting, holding hearings and voting on the next president’s Cabinet nominees during the first few months of the new year.

“That is a very, I think, fair observation about what could happen next year, and is something I think everybody needs to factor in when we make a determination about how long the CR ought to be for,” Thune said.

The negative effects on the Defense Department and military readiness were also cited by Thune in connection with a longer stopgap spending bill.

“When we fund the government, we ought to do it in a way that provides predictability and certainty, especially to our military planners,” Thune said. “So I think that’s an argument for a shorter term and trying to resolve these issues before the new Congress comes in, in January.”

But, he said, GOP leaders in the Senate are planning to consider the stance of those who want the longer, six-month spending measure that House Republicans have put forward.

“There are those who believe that punting this in the next year is a good strategy,” Thune said. “We’ll hear everybody out on that in the next couple of days, and then, depending on what the House sends over, what Schumer decides to do with it, we’ll figure out how to respond from there.”

*Ariana Figueroa contributed to this report.*

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



## Trump's support of Florida marijuana legalization may show growing bipartisan consensus

BY: JACOB FISCHLER - SEPTEMBER 10, 2024 6:30 AM

Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump's early Monday statement that he would vote to legalize recreational marijuana use in Florida sent a strong signal that both major parties are moving to adopt popular marijuana reform efforts, unexpectedly elevating the issue in the presidential battle.

But the campaign for the Democratic nominee, Vice President Kamala Harris, expressed strong skepticism about Trump's sudden embrace of reform and criticized Trump's record in office, accusing him of "blatant pandering" after States Newsroom inquired about Harris' position on legalization.

The statement from Trump, who has sought to portray himself as a "law and order" candidate throughout his political career, shows the growing support for marijuana legalization among voters of both parties nationwide — and could be a signal that GOP elected officials will align themselves with legalization, Josh Glasstetter, a spokesperson for the advocacy group U.S. Cannabis Council, said in an interview with States Newsroom.

"Trump's statement on Truth Social signals that there is a political realignment that is well underway on the issue of cannabis reform," Glasstetter said.

Trump said in a post to his social media platform that he would vote yes on Florida's Amendment 3, a ballot initiative to legalize recreational cannabis use in the state.

He also said he supported federal legislation to remove federal restrictions on banking services for state-legal marijuana businesses and moving cannabis from Schedule I to Schedule III of the federal Controlled Substances Act.

States with legal recreational marijuana industries, which now number 24, have long sought tweaks to federal law to allow banks to legally provide loans and other services to marijuana businesses that are legal under state law. Bills in Congress, while largely bipartisan, have been introduced for years but not yet won the consensus needed to become law.

Schedule I is the most restrictive category under federal law and indicates a drug has no medicinal value and high risk of abuse. President Joe Biden's administration has started the move to Schedule III, which includes heavily regulated legal substances including Tylenol with codeine.

### Harris camp blasts Trump

The Harris campaign said Trump is trying to gloss over his past.

"Despite his blatant pandering, Donald Trump cannot paper over his extensive record of dragging marijuana reform backward," campaign spokesman Joseph Costello wrote in an email. "As president, Trump cracked down on nonviolent marijuana offenses — undermining state legalization laws, opposed safe banking legislation, and even tried to remove protections for medical marijuana.



**A marijuana plant at the Dakota Herb grow operation near Tea, South Dakota. The state has legalized medical marijuana and will vote on recreational marijuana in November.** (John Hult/South Dakota Searchlight)

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"Donald Trump does not actually believe in marijuana reform, but the American people are smart enough to see through his campaign lies."

The campaign did not respond to a follow-up message seeking clarity on Harris' position on the issue.

Trump's first attorney general, Jeff Sessions, took a hard line against a growing trend of states legalizing marijuana use. He rescinded a 2013 document known as the Cole memo that required federal officials to stay out of state-legal marijuana operations.

But Glasstetter said Trump had "clearly reassessed his position" on the issue, reflecting a consensus among voters that Republican officials have been slower to adopt.

"For many years now, cannabis reform advocates have talked about the growing bipartisan consensus among voters in support of cannabis reform and elected officials have been a lagging indicator, particularly on the conservative side of the spectrum," he said.

While Harris has not highlighted the issue — besides not answering emailed questions Monday, the campaign's newly launched issues page on its website does not mention cannabis — she is seen as an ally of reformers based on her record, including as U.S. senator and California attorney general, Glasstetter said.

Harris convened a roundtable of marijuana reform advocates at the White House in March that included rapper Fat Joe and Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear, a Democrat. At that event, she promoted the administration's work to relax federal marijuana restrictions and spoke in favor of broad reforms.

"I've said many times: I believe — I think we all at this table believe — no one should have to go to jail for smoking weed," she said.

## Leading Republicans

Trump's endorsement could be seen as an attempt to close the policy gap between the parties on a popular issue.

Republicans in Congress have lagged behind their Democratic colleagues in seeking marijuana reforms, even as polls and ballot initiatives in states that favor both parties have shown legalizing marijuana use is an increasingly popular position among voters of all political persuasions, Glasstetter said.

A Pew Research Center poll this year showed 88% of respondents thought marijuana should be legal for recreational or medical use. That was up from 68% in the same survey in 2022.

At a May hearing of the U.S. House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice and Science, just days after Attorney General Merrick Garland announced the administration would seek to reschedule cannabis, Republican representatives voiced skepticism over the move to federal Drug Enforcement Administrator Anne Milgram.

Rep. Robert Aderholt, an Alabama Republican, noted studies finding a connection between cannabis use and psychosis. The country is dealing with a mental health crisis, he said.

"My concern is rescheduling marijuana would make the crisis worse," he said.

But an endorsement from Trump, who holds immense influence among congressional Republicans, could be crucial to getting more Republicans to change their positions, Glasstetter said.

"Former President Trump is a leading indicator," he said. "We expect that his high-profile embrace of cannabis reform will make it much easier for other Republicans, particularly in Congress, to come out in support of cannabis reform."

*Jacob covers federal policy as a senior reporter for States Newsroom. Based in Oregon, he focuses on Western issues. His coverage areas include climate, energy development, public lands and infrastructure.*

## Harris tears into Trump over abortion rights and race in tense presidential debate

BY: ASHLEY MURRAY AND JACOB FISCHLER - SEPTEMBER 11, 2024 12:22 AM

Vice President Kamala Harris and former President Donald Trump touted policy proposals and traded barbs Tuesday during a presidential debate packed with promises to revive America's economy and riddled with Trump's falsehoods about abortion, the 2020 election results and immigration.

The debate at the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia hosted by ABC News just 56 days before the election was also notable as the first exchange between the candidates since President Joe Biden exited the race weeks after his botched debate performance in late June.

It is the only debate the campaigns have agreed to before the November election, although the Harris camp afterward suggested they're ready for another and Fox News offered to host it in October.

The night began with Democratic nominee Harris crossing the stage to initiate a handshake and introducing herself to Trump, the GOP candidate. The two had never before met.

But the back-and-forth quickly grew contentious, as Trump blasted Harris' record as vice president under President Joe Biden, and Harris said Trump was unfit to be president for myriad reasons. The two did not shake hands at the close.

Harris portrayed herself as a champion of the middle class. She presented a hopeful vision of the country that she sought to contrast with what she described as Trump's self-centered vision that included attacks on the country's democratic traditions and people of color.

"I am actually the only person on this stage who has a plan that is about lifting up the middle class and working people of America," she said. "I believe in the ambition, the aspirations, the dreams of the American people."

The vice president lambasted Trump as "extreme" and sought to tie him to the ultraconservative Project 2025, with which he denied an association. Harris also underscored the numerous legal cases Trump continues to face. Trump is the first former president to become a convicted felon.

"Donald Trump actually has no plan for you," she said. "Because he is more interested in defending himself than he is in looking out for you."

Trump repeated unverified claims about migrants eating dogs in Ohio, returned time and again to com-



**Former President Donald Trump, at left, the Republican presidential nominee, and Vice President Kamala Harris, the Democratic presidential nominee, debate for the first time during the presidential election campaign at The National Constitution Center on Sept. 10, 2024, in Philadelphia.** (Win McNamee/Getty Images)



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plaints about immigration, defended his plan to raise tariffs and boasted about campaign rally crowd sizes — after Harris taunted him about his events, saying people left.

"In Springfield, they're eating the dogs, the people that came in, they're eating the cats. They're eating, they're eating the pets of the people that live there," Trump said in one of the more jarring moments of the debate, when he repeated baseless claims about Haitian migrants. The rumors have circulated on social media in recent days, and have been amplified by Trump's running mate, Ohio U.S. Sen. J.D. Vance.

Trump challenged Harris to use her position in the administration to address inflation and immigration, suggesting that she was not actually able to follow through on her promises.

"She doesn't have a plan," he said. "She copied Biden's plan, and it's like four sentences like, 'Run, Spot, run,' four sentences that are just, 'Oh, we'll try and lower taxes.' She doesn't have a plan."

Polls show the race is virtually tied nationally and in seven key states that will decide the Electoral College margin: Wisconsin, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Georgia, North Carolina, Arizona and Nevada. Harris enjoyed a polling bump soon after she became a candidate, but her numbers have dropped in the weeks since and recent polls showed her roughly even with Trump.

## Election integrity

The 2024 presidential election marks a test for the peaceful transfer of power after political violence marred the nation's tradition when Trump's refusal to accept his loss sparked a Jan. 6, 2021 riot at the U.S. Capitol.

Trump repeated false claims during Tuesday's debate that he won the 2020 presidential election, even walking back recent public statements that seemed to accept defeat.

Asked by moderator David Muir if recent statements that he "lost by a whisker" and similar sentiments were acknowledgements he'd lost, Trump said the comments were sarcastic.

"I don't acknowledge that at all," he said. "That was said sarcastically."

Harris called Trump's answer "deeply troubling."

"You did, in fact, lose that election," she told him. She added that his continued denial "leads one to believe that perhaps we do not have, in the candidate to my right, the temperament or the ability to not be confused about fact. That's deeply troubling, and the American people deserve better."

When asked if he regretted any of his actions when the U.S. Capitol was violently overrun by his supporters, Trump defended himself and returned to the topic of immigration.

"I had nothing to do with that, other than they asked me to make a speech," Trump said.

Harris responded: "For everyone watching who remembers what January 6 was, I say 'We don't have to go back.'"

## Race

Moderators asked Trump about his disparaging comments about Harris' biracial identity to the National Association of Black Journalists last month. Muir questioned if it was appropriate for Trump to weigh in on his opponent's race.

Trump said it was not appropriate, but seemed to defend the comment that Harris had "turned Black" to promote her political career.

"I don't care what she is," he said. "Whatever she wants to be is OK with me. All I can say is that I read where she was not Black, that she put out, and I'll say that, and then I read that she was Black, and that's okay. Either one was okay with me. That's up to her."

Harris called it "a tragedy" that Trump continued "to use race to divide the American people."

She invoked allegations that he refused to rent his residential properties to Black families, spread conspiracy theories that the first Black president, Barack Obama, was not born in the United States and supported the execution of Black and Latino boys accused of murder in New York's Central Park. The suspects were later exonerated.

"The American people want better than that, want better than this," she said, adding that voters wanted

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a conversation about how candidates could improve their lives. "Regardless of people's color or the language their grandmother speaks, we all have the same dreams and aspirations, and want a president who invests in those, not in hate and division."

## Abortion and IVF

The 2024 presidential election is the first since the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in a 6-3 decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade*.

While Trump told debate moderators that he would not sign a nationwide abortion bill into law, he refused to give a yes or no answer when asked if he would veto one.

Moderator Linsey Davis corrected Trump after he claimed that some states allow abortion "in the ninth month," but he continued to repeat it throughout the debate.

Trump hailed the Supreme Court justices — three of whom he appointed — for giving full control of abortion laws to state governments.

"What I did is something, for 52 years, they have been trying to get *Roe v. Wade* into the states, and through the genius and heart and strength of six Supreme Court justices, we were able to do that," Trump said, adding that he "strongly" believes in exceptions for rape, incest and the life of the mother.

Harris said she would "proudly" sign a bill into law that restored the federal right to an abortion.

"One does not have to abandon their faith or deeply held beliefs to agree the government and Donald Trump certainly should not be telling a woman what to do with her body," Harris said.

She attacked what she dubbed "Donald Trump's abortion bans" and said his actions resulted in a reality where couples "who pray and dream of having a family are being denied IVF treatments."

In vitro fertilization, or IVF, has become a lightning rod for debate on the right after an Alabama court ruled in early 2024 that frozen embryos counted as children. Legislators in the state have since passed a law to restore IVF access.

Trump said Harris was telling "another lie."

"I have been a leader on IVF, with which is fertilization, the IVF. I have been a leader," he said.

## Taxes, the economy, health care

With Trump's signature 2017 tax law expiring at the end of 2025, tax policy has been front and center of the 2024 presidential race.

Harris trumpeted her plans for an "opportunity economy" and panned Trump's proposal to raise tariffs and "provide a tax cut for billionaires and big corporations."

"Donald Trump has no plan for you, and when you look at his economic plan, it's all about tax breaks for the richest people," Harris said on the debate stage.

Harris' proposals include increasing the corporate tax rate to 28%, permanently expanding the child tax credit to pandemic levels and extending up to \$6,000 to new parents, providing up to \$50,000 in tax relief for business start-up costs, and offering new homebuyers a \$25,000 tax credit.

A large part of Trump's economic plan is to impose universal tariffs of at

least 10% on all U.S. imports, with tariffs on Chinese goods at 60%. When asked by Muir if the approach could cause consumer prices to increase, Trump denied the possibility.

"We're not going to have higher prices. What's going to happen, who's going to have higher prices is China, and all of the countries that have been ripping us off for years," Trump said.

Trump has promised, at minimum, to extend his tax policies, which cut individual income tax rates, lowered the corporate tax rate to 21%, loosened business expensing and deductions, and doubled the child tax credit to \$2,000.

Economists warn that if extended, the Trump-era tax cuts would add trillions to the deficit. That total could reach between \$4 trillion and \$5.8 trillion over the next decade, according to the University of Pennsylvania's Penn Wharton Budget Model. In a separate model, the Tax Foundation estimated the policies could reduce federal revenue up to \$6.1 trillion over a 10-year window.

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The Penn Wharton model estimates Harris' proposals would increase the deficit by up to \$2 trillion over ten years. Modeling from the Tax Foundation released Tuesday predicts the vice president's plan would increase taxes by \$4.1 trillion over the next decade, but after accounting for various tax cuts and credits, the projected revenue drops to \$1.7 trillion, and even further if slowed economic growth is considered.

On health care, Trump said he had "concepts of a plan" to overhaul the law signed by President Barack Obama in 2010.

"I would only change it if we come up with something that's better and less expensive," he said. "And there are concepts and options we have to do that, and you'll be hearing about it in the not too distant future."

Harris defended the law known as "Obamacare."

## Immigration and border security

Trump tried several times to steer the conversation to immigration, his signature issue since he began his first White House run in 2015.

He referenced viral — but unverified — stories of sensational disruptions caused by immigrants in Springfield, Ohio, and Aurora, Colorado, and blamed Harris and Biden for the supposed episodes.

"These are the people that she and Biden let into our country," he said.

Continuing Biden's immigration policies would turn the country into "Venezuela on steroids," he said.

Harris laughed after Trump pressed unverified claims about immigration. "Talk about extreme," she said.

Harris promoted a bipartisan immigration and border security bill this year that included measures Republicans sought to strengthen enforcement. But the bill fell apart, she said, under opposition from Trump, who preferred campaigning on the issue to solving the problem.

When moderators then asked Trump about the bill, he began his answer by bragging about crowds at his campaign rallies, responding to a comment Harris had made.

Rally attendance remained high, he said, "because people want to take their country back."

"Our country is being lost," he said. "We're a failing nation, and it happened three-and-a-half years ago. And what? What's going on here? ... What they have done to our country by allowing these millions and millions of people to come into our country and look at what's happening to the towns all over the United States."

He did not answer the question about the bill.

## Energy and climate

Moderators asked Harris about her position on hydraulic fracturing, a technique for extracting natural gas better known as fracking.

The process is controversial among environmentalists, but a major industry in gas-rich Pennsylvania. During her unsuccessful bid for the Democratic nomination in 2020, Harris told a climate activist during a televised town hall that she favored banning fracking, but has said this year that is not her position.

Asked by Davis to explain the change Tuesday night, she said she's also made clear in 2020 that she did not want to ban fracking.

She also noted her tie-breaking vote in the Senate to pass the Inflation Reduction Act, a massive energy, taxes and domestic policy law Democrats passed along party lines in 2022 that included expanded leases for natural gas production.

Trump urged voters not to believe Harris.

"If she becomes president, fracking in Pennsylvania will end on day one," he said.

The last question before closing statements was on climate change.

Harris called it a threat and touted the Biden administration's work to expand the clean energy industry, while preserving natural gas jobs.

Trump declined to answer the question, instead focusing on the work of Hunter Biden, the president's son, with a Ukrainian energy company. Trump called the Biden administration "corrupt."



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## Foreign policy

As the humanitarian crisis continues in the Gaza Strip with deaths mounting 40,000, according to Gaza health officials, Davis asked Harris how she could break through a stalemate on a proposed cease-fire deal between Israel and Hamas militants.

The vice president offered little detail on how to finally broker a deal, but said, "What we know is this war must end."

"It must end immediately, and the way it will end is we need a cease-fire deal, and we need the hostages out, and so we will continue to work around the clock on that — work around the clock — also understanding that we must chart a course for a two-state solution," she said.

Harris added that she will "always give Israel the ability to defend itself, in particular as it relates to Iran."

Trump lashed back with accusations that Harris "hates" Israel and the "Arab population," and repeated his refrain that "if I were president, (the war) would have never started."

"I will get that settled and fast, and I'll get the war with Ukraine and Russia ended. If I'm president-elect, I'll get it done before even becoming president," Trump said.

He did not directly answer if he wanted Ukraine to win the war.

"I think it's in the U.S. best interest to get this war finished and just get it done, negotiate a deal, because we have to stop all of these human lives from being destroyed," Trump said when asked if a Ukraine victory is in the U.S.'s best interest.

Harris said she would continue to stand with NATO allies on defending Ukraine.

"I believe the reason that Donald Trump says that this war would be over within 24 hours is because he would just give it up. And that's not who we are as Americans," she rebutted.

Another foreign policy topic was on display at the U.S. Capitol hours before the debate when congressional leaders held a ceremony honoring 13 service members who were killed during the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan.

Trump and Republican lawmakers have ratcheted up criticism of Harris — implicating her hundreds of times in a damning report released Monday — for the Biden administration's handling of the August 2021 exit from Afghanistan after two decades of war.

"I will tell you I agreed with President Biden's decision to pull out of Afghanistan. Four presidents said they would, and Joe Biden did," Harris told Muir when asked if she bears any responsibility for the deadly withdrawal.

Harris criticized Trump for "negotiating directly with a terrorist organization" when he struck a deal with the Taliban before he left office.

Trump defended himself saying "I got involved with the Taliban because the Taliban was doing the killing" and said he achieved a "very good agreement."

Trump made waves on the recent third anniversary of the 13 service members' deaths when his staffers pushed an Arlington National Cemetery official aside to take photos in a restricted area, according to the U.S. Army and reporting by NPR.

## Swift endorsement

Shortly after the debate's close, mega star Taylor Swift said in an Instagram post she would vote for Harris.

Part of Swift's exuberant fan base had called on her to endorse Harris, following her support for Biden and Harris four years ago.

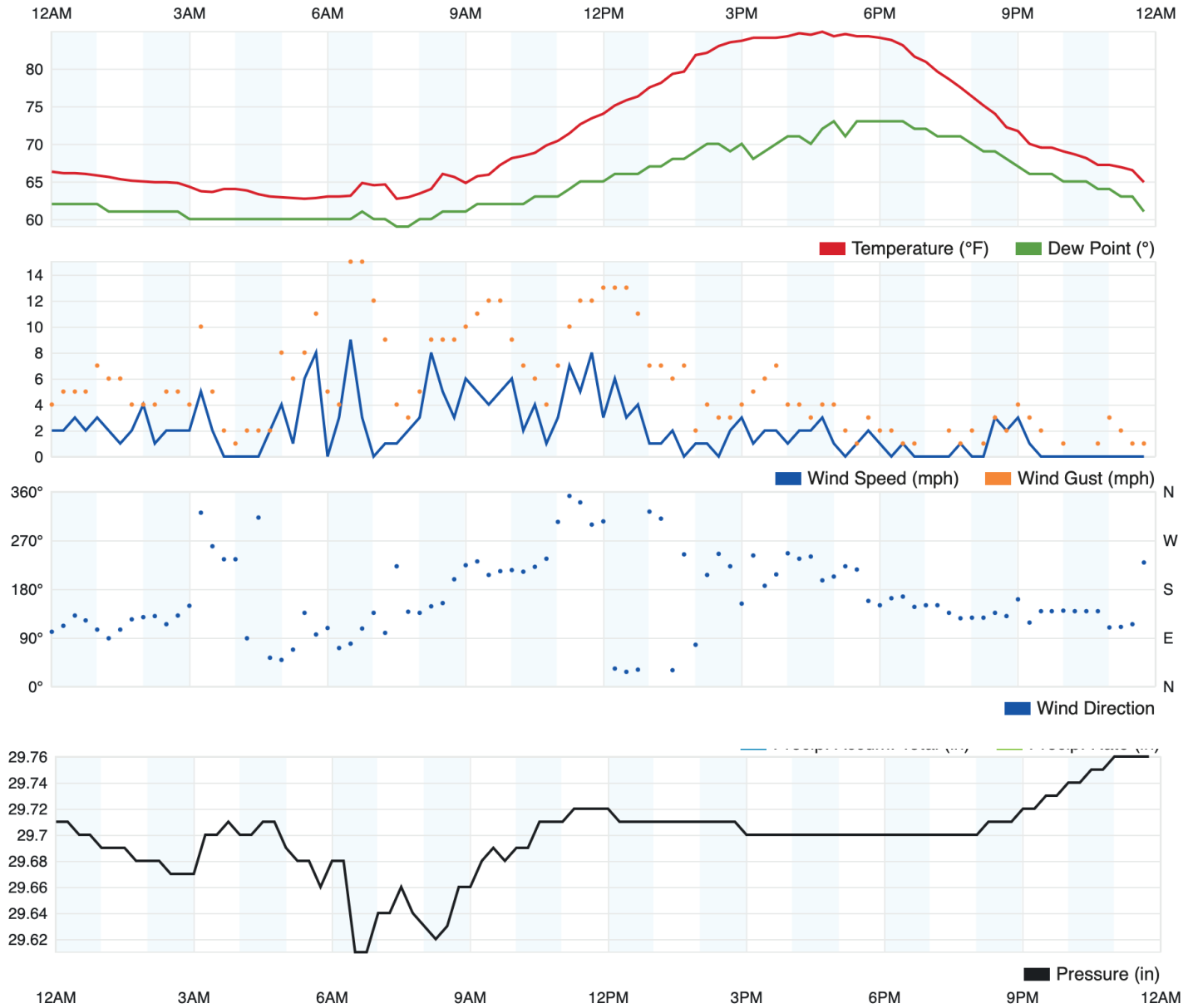
*Ashley Murray covers the nation's capital as a senior reporter for States Newsroom. Her coverage areas include domestic policy and appropriations.*

*Jacob covers federal policy as a senior reporter for States Newsroom. Based in Oregon, he focuses on Western issues. His coverage areas include climate, energy development, public lands and infrastructure.*

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today



High: 89 °F

Patchy Fog then Mostly Sunny

Tonight



Low: 62 °F

Partly Cloudy

Thursday



High: 87 °F

Sunny and Breezy

Thursday Night



Low: 66 °F

Mostly Clear and Breezy

Friday



High: 83 °F

Chance Showers and Breezy



Above Average Temperatures and Windy For the End of the Week

September 11, 2024  
4:05 AM

<p><b>Today</b></p> <p>SMOKE  <b>Hot</b></p> <p><b>Red Flag Warning Issued</b></p> <p>FOR JONES COUNTY</p> <p>Highs: 84-95°</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sustained southeast winds between 25-35 mph on Thursday             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gusts 40+ mph</li> <li>Highest over central South Dakota</li> </ul> </li> <li>Wind gusts of 30-40 mph continue Friday             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Diminishing Friday evening</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Maximum Wind Gust Forecast (mph)</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th rowspan="2"></th> <th colspan="6">9/12 Thu</th> <th colspan="6">9/13 Fri</th> </tr> <tr> <th>6am</th><th>9am</th><th>12pm</th><th>3pm</th><th>6pm</th><th>9pm</th> <th>12am</th><th>3am</th><th>6am</th><th>9am</th><th>12pm</th><th>3pm</th><th>6pm</th><th>9pm</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> 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McIntosh	39	47	51	53	52	47	38	33	29	26	26	26	23	17																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																												
Miller	32	40	47	48	43	39	37	36	35	38	38	36	26	22																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																												
Mobridge	36	40	44	46	45	45	41	39	37	33	30	28	23	17																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																												
Murdo	40	48	52	53	53	49	40	36	32	31	29	26	22	17																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																												
Pierre	35	43	46	47	46	46	39	33	32	31	29	26	22	15																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																												
Redfield	28	35	39	40	37	36	33	31	32	33	33	32	25	22																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																												
Sisseton	20	26	33	35	32	30	28	26	26	32	33	35	29	24																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																												
Watertown	24	30	35	36	31	31	30	29	29	33	33	35	28	24																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																												
Webster	28	35	41	43	39	37	36	33	33	39	40	40	32	29																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																												

Several mentions for the upcoming weather: 1. Patchy to areas of dense fog is occurring over the James River Valley and will continue through this morning before dissipating. 2. Smoke, from the wildfires out west, will be ongoing over the area today, mainly staying aloft. 3. A Red Flag Warning is in effect for Jones County through 7pm CDT due to afternoon relative humidity dropping to around 20 percent and winds gusting to 35 mph. Any fires that ignite will spread rapidly and become difficult to control or suppress. 4. Windy conditions for the end of the week, with Thursday being the windiest day, especially over central SD, where gusts could reach 45-50+ mph.



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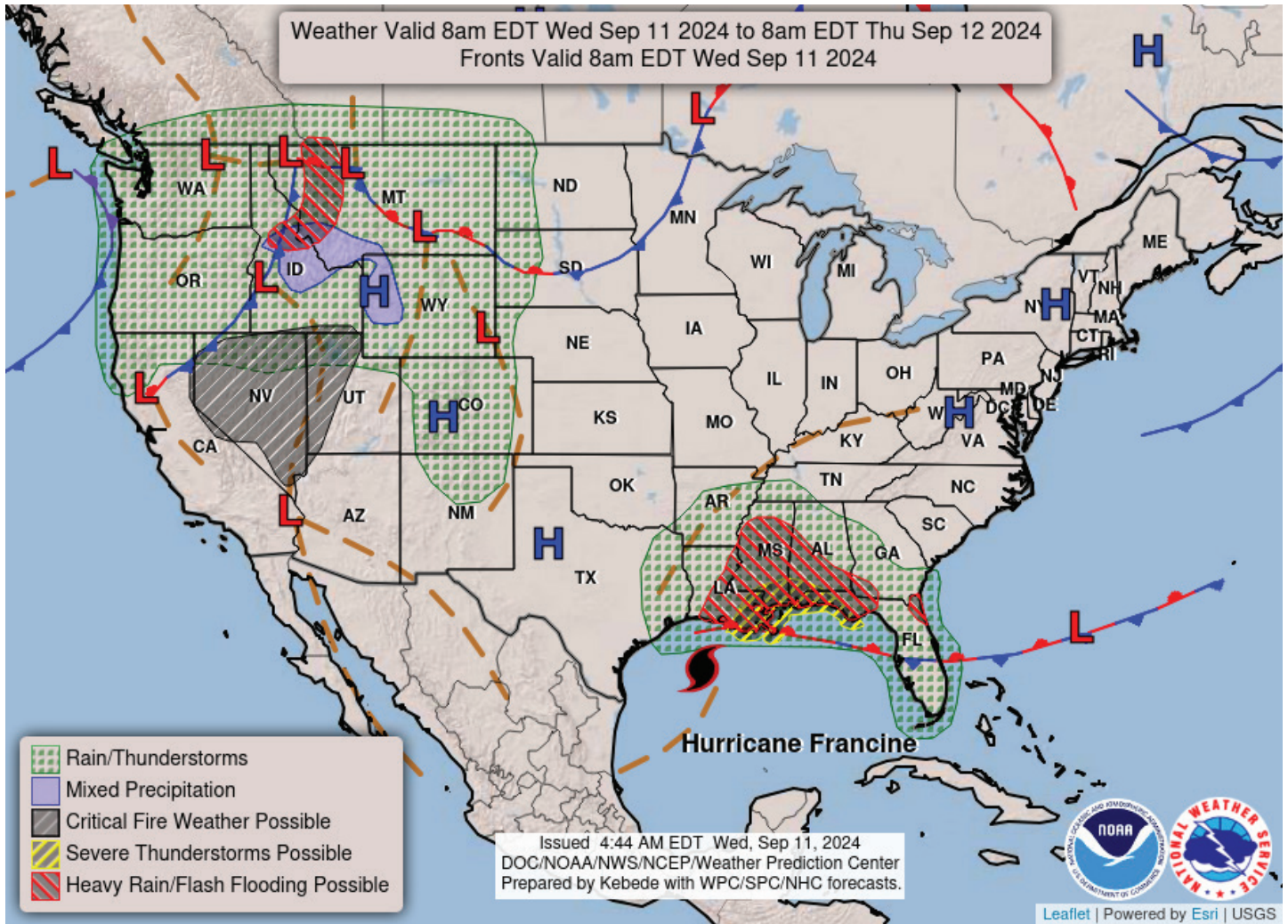
## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 85 °F at 4:43 PM**  
**Low Temp: 62 °F at 5:38 AM**  
**Wind: 15 mph at 3:16 AM**  
**Precip: : 0.00**

Day length: 13 hours, 46 minutes

## Today's Info

Record High: 100 in 1927  
Record Low: 100 in 1927  
Average High: 77  
Average Low: 49  
Average Precip in Sept.: 0.68  
Precip to date in Sept.: 0.01  
Average Precip to date: 17.09  
Precip Year to Date: 19.42  
Sunset Tonight: 7:51:57 pm  
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:06:45 am



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## Today in Weather History

September 11, 1978: High winds to 65 mph damaged the roofs of several barns outside of Watertown during the early evening.

1900: The remnants of the Great Galveston Hurricane were located over central Iowa on this day. Eastern Nebraska, northwest Iowa, and southern Minnesota show four-plus inches of rain from this storm.

1949 - An early snowstorm brought 7.5 inches to Helena MT. In Maine, a storm drenched New Brunswick with 8.05 inches of rain in 24 hours, a state record. (The Weather Channel)

1961 - Very large and slow moving Hurricane Carla made landfall near Port Lavaca TX. Carla battered the central Texas coast with wind gusts to 175 mph, and up to 16 inches of rain, and spawned a vicious tornado which swept across Galveston Island killing eight persons. The hurricane claimed 45 lives, and caused 300 million dollars damage. The remnants of Carla produced heavy rain in the Lower Missouri Valley and southern sections of the Upper Great Lakes Region. (David Ludlum) (Storm Data)

1976 - Up to five inches of rain brought walls of water and millions of tons of debris into Bullhead City AZ via washes from elevations above 3000 feet. Flooding caused more than three million dollars damage. Chasms up to forty feet deep were cut across some roads. (The Weather Channel)

1986 - Thunderstorms caused flash flooding and subsequent river flooding in central Lower Michigan. Up to 14 inches of rain fell in a 72 hour period, and flooding caused 400 million dollars damage. (Storm Data)

1987 - Late afternoon and evening thunderstorms produced large hail and damaging winds in Texas, and spawned three tornadoes. Thunderstorm winds gusted to 70 mph at Goodnight TX. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Snow blanketed parts of the Central Rocky Mountain Region and the Central Plateau, with ten inches reported at Mount Evans in Colorado. Smoke from forest fires in the northwestern U.S. reached Pennsylvania and New York State. Hurricane Gilbert, moving westward over the Caribbean, was packing winds of 100 mph by the end of the day. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Nine cities in the north central U.S. reported record low temperatures for the date, including Havre MT with a reading of 23 degrees. Livingston MT and West Yellowstone MT tied for honors as the cold spot in the nation with morning lows of 17 degrees. Thunderstorms produced hail over the Sierra Nevada Range of California, with two inches reported on the ground near Donner Summit. The hail made roads very slick, resulting in a twenty car accident. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1992: Hurricane Iniki struck the island of Kaua'i with winds of 145 mph and a central pressure of 27.91 inches of mercury, making it a Category 4 hurricane. Iniki is the strongest hurricane to strike Hawaii Islands in recent history.

2011: Hurricane Erin was off the coast of New Jersey and New York on this day.



## I MUST KNOW THEM!

Years ago there was a king who would leave his palace and walk through the streets of his city dressed as was one of his subjects. His guards feared for his life and often would try to stop him. Said one, "You must not do it for security's sake!"

"But," he replied, "I can't rule my people unless I know them and how they live."

What a comfort to know that our God knows us and understands us from having lived a human life in and through His Son. Whatever we face He has faced and whatever path we travel He has traveled. Jesus learned life's secrets in the school of experience and can now bring us His encouragement, strength, insight and guidance.

We often forget that Jesus gained His knowledge of life's ways because He was here among "us." And He is now with His Father and remembers what it is like to be lonely and rejected, abandoned and fearful, alone and afraid, weary and worn out. He understands what it means to be tempted and tried, embarrassed and rejected and even forsaken by His very own brothers.

And it is because He passed through all of these experiences that now, in Heaven, He can be touched with our infirmities, and give us His sympathy, help, hope and understanding. Remember, He has endured and survived whatever His Father brings into our lives.

Prayer: We are grateful, Father, that You know us, understand us and now intercede for us. This gives us confidence to hold on tightly and never give up. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. Hebrews 4:14-16

*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:  
09.10.24

1 2 16 24 66 6

MegaPlier: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$20,000,000**

NEXT 2 Days 17 Hrs 9  
DRAW: Mins 57 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 16 Hrs 24 Mins  
DRAW: 56 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:  
09.10.24

30 39 42 45 48 6

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

NEXT 16 Hrs 39 Mins  
DRAW: 56 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:  
09.07.24

1 3 6 22 31

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$26,000**

NEXT 16 Hrs 39 Mins  
DRAW: 57 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:  
09.09.24

10 14 38 42 45 26

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

NEXT 17 Hrs 8 Mins 57  
DRAW: 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 17 Hrs 8 Mins 57  
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

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## Upcoming Groton Events

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



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## News from the **AP** Associated Press

### Tuesday's Scores

The Associated Press

PREP VOLLEYBALL=

Aberdeen Christian def. Langford, 25-11, 25-21, 25-20

Aberdeen Roncalli def. Florence-Henry, 25-19, 25-18, 25-15

Andes Central/Dakota Christian def. Freeman Academy-Marion, 25-21, 25-13, 25-16

Avon def. Tripp-Delmont-Armour, 27-25, 25-13, 25-18

Brandon Valley def. Sioux Falls Lincoln, 20-25, 25-21, 25-19, 25-14

Bridgewater-Emery def. Menno, 25-20, 25-23, 27-25

Brookings def. Tea, 25-19, 25-15, 20-25, 25-18

Canton def. Parker, 25-19, 25-11, 25-10

Castlewood def. Waverly-South Shore, 25-13, 25-10, 25-14

Centerville def. Freeman, 25-15, 25-14, 16-25, 25-13

Chester def. Baltic, 25-20, 25-16, 20-25, 25-20

Cheyenne-Eagle Butte def. McLaughlin, 25-19, 25-16, 20-25, 25-14

Clark-Willow Lake def. Wilmot, 25-12, 25-18, 25-18

Colman-Egan def. Estelline-Hendricks, 25-14, 25-15, 19-25, 25-22

Corsica/Stickney def. Sanborn Central-Woonsocket, 28-26, 25-23, 7-25, 12-25, 15-10

Custer def. Sturgis Brown High School, 25-20, 25-14, 28-26

DeSmet def. Deuel, 25-16, 25-16, 25-13

Deubrook def. Flandreau, 25-15, 25-22, 25-23

Elk Point-Jefferson def. West Central, 25-14, 18-25, 25-16, 25-9

Faith def. Hettinger-Scranton, N.D., 20-25, 25-16, 25-23, 25-15

Gayville-Volin High School def. Scotland, 25-8, 25-13, 25-13

Great Plains Lutheran def. Milbank, 25-18, 25-17, 25-14

Hanson def. Howard, 25-17, 25-14, 25-20

Harding County def. Bowman County, N.D., 25-19, 25-15, 25-12

Highmore-Harrold def. Sunshine Bible Academy, 25-13, 25-14, 25-15

Hill City def. Douglas, 25-10, 25-18, 25-15

Hitchcock-Tulare def. Faulkton, 25-18, 20-25, 25-17, 25-13

Ipswich def. Sully Buttes, 25-17, 25-20, 25-13

Lakota Tech def. Todd County, 23-25, 25-9, 25-23, 25-16

Lemmon High School def. McIntosh High School, 25-12, 25-13, 25-18

Lyman def. Colome, 25-11, 25-18, 24-26, 25-12

Mobridge-Pollock def. North Central, 25-22, 25-18, 25-13

Mt. Vernon/Plankinton def. Ethan, 25-23, 28-26, 25-12

Northwestern def. Herreid-Selby, 28-26, 25-6, 25-9

Redfield def. Leola-Frederick High School, 25-12, 25-10, 25-12

Santee, Neb. def. Marty

Sioux Falls Christian def. Madison, 25-5, 25-14, 25-14

Sioux Falls Jefferson def. Sioux Falls Washington, 15-25, 25-18, 27-25, 25-21

Spearfish def. Rapid City Christian, 25-11, 25-16, 25-14

St Thomas More def. Belle Fourche, 25-16, 25-11, 25-7

T F Riggs High School def. Mitchell, 25-18, 21-25, 25-22, 23-25, 15-13

Timber Lake def. Potter County, 26-24, 20-25, 25-23, 25-18

Vermillion def. Bon Homme, 25-22, 11-25, 25-20, 26-24

Wagner def. Platte-Geddes, 23-25, 23-25, 25-20, 25-8, 15-9

Warner def. Miller, 25-14, 25-21, 26-24

Watertown def. Huron, 26-24, 25-16, 21-25, 25-16

White River def. Wall, 15-25, 24-26, 25-22, 26-24, 16-14

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

## Denard Robinson and Braylon Edwards are among former Michigan players suing NCAA and Big Ten Network

By RALPH D. RUSSO AP College Football Writer

Former Michigan football stars Denard Robinson and Braylon Edwards are suing the NCAA and Big Ten Network with other former Wolverines players, claiming they lost out on more than \$50 million during their college careers because of the association's now-lifted ban on athletes being compensated for name, image and likeness.

The federal class-action antitrust lawsuit, dated Monday, was filed in the Eastern District of Michigan on behalf of all Michigan football players who played before 2016. It also includes former Wolverines players Mike Martin and Shawn Crable as plaintiffs.

The NCAA and major college conferences are in the process of trying to settle three antitrust lawsuits related to athlete compensation for name, image and likeness. They have a settlement agreement in place to pay \$2.78 billion in damages to hundreds of thousands of college athletes, dating back to 2016.

The NCAA changed its rules in 2021 to allow athletes to cash in on their fame through sponsorship and endorsement deals after decades of prohibition.

At a hearing last week, the federal judge overseeing those cases declined to grant preliminary approval of the deal and kicked it back to attorneys to address her concerns with certain aspects of the agreement.

On Tuesday, another lawsuit was filed against the NCAA, targeting the settlement agreement. The South Dakota attorney general's complaint on behalf of his state's two Division I universities — South Dakota State and the University of South Dakota — alleges the proposed settlement forces smaller schools like those to be responsible for a disproportionate share of the cost.

The Michigan lawsuit aims to recoup what notable stars such as Robinson and Edwards were denied when they played, and it claims the players should be compensated for the highlights and replays of their exploits that are still used by television networks.

"These iconic moments have been repeatedly shown and replayed on BTN (Big Ten Network) and related networks, helping continue the fascination and passion of the sport. They have significantly contributed to the revenue generated by the NCAA and its partners," the lawsuit said.

The NCAA did not immediately respond to a request for comment from The Associated Press.

Robinson was a record-breaking quarterback for Michigan from 2009-12 who was given the nickname Shoelace because he played with untied cleats. He was also depicted on the cover of the last EA Sports NCAA video game before the series was discontinued for a decade because of the first lawsuit targeting the NCAA's ban on NIL compensation. The game returned this year as College Football '25, with players being paid to have their names and likenesses used.

"They made hundreds of millions off the Michigan brand. The Michigan brand, I'd argue, is the most valuable in college sports. They made hundreds of millions of dollars, BTN made millions, and these guys didn't get any of it," Michigan-based attorney Jim Acho told the AP. "That's just wrong, and it's not just wrong it's unlawful."

Robinson recently had worked as a football staffer for the school but was let go in May after an arrest for suspicion of driving while intoxicated.

Edwards played from 2001-04 and is considered one of the greatest receivers in school history. He was an All-American who went on to become a first-round draft pick by the Cleveland Browns.

Martin played defensive line for the Wolverines from 2008-11. Crable played linebacker from 2003-07.

Acho said it is too speculative to know if approval of the NCAA's settlement agreement will impact this new lawsuit.

"And it's too speculative for me to hold off on filing," he said.

## **Pope lands in economic power Singapore after a joyous visit to impoverished, devout East Timor**

By NICOLE WINFIELD and NINIEK KARMINI Associated Press

SINGAPORE (AP) — Pope Francis flew to Singapore on Wednesday for the final leg of his trip through Asia, arriving in one of the world's richest countries from one of its poorest after a record-setting final Mass in East Timor.

After a brief farewell ceremony, Francis, the Vatican delegation and journalists traveling with him flew to Singapore aboard local carrier Aero Dili's only aircraft, an Airbus A320. It landed about three hours later in Singapore, where Francis had no public events scheduled for the rest of the day.

Francis wrapped up his visit to East Timor with a rally Wednesday morning of its young people, who make up the majority of the 1.3 million population. He urged them to work together to build their young country, using the foundations of older generations who formally secured their independence from Indonesia in 2002, to grow in peace, prosperity and reconciliation.

"Go forward with the happiness of youth, but don't forget one thing," Francis told them. "You are the heirs of those who persevered in founding this nation. For this, don't lose your memory, the memory of those who persevered with so much sacrifice to consolidate this nation."

The 87-year-old pope, who is on the longest and farthest trip of his pontificate, ditched his prepared remarks to speak off the cuff in his native Spanish, as he often does when he's around young people.

The joyous encounter came just hours after around 600,000 people — or nearly half the population — packed a seaside park for Francis' Mass. It was held on the same field where St. John Paul II prayed 35 years ago, when East Timor was under brutally oppressive Indonesian rule.

Francis came to East Timor, also known as Timor-Leste, to encourage it more than two decades after it secured independence as it struggles with poverty and high unemployment.

In his final remarks at the end of the liturgy, Francis warned the Timorese today to beware of the "crocodiles" who come ashore and "want to change your culture, your history."

It was an apparent reference both to East Timor's past, as a colonial possession of first Portugal and then Indonesia, but also its current attractiveness to international commercial interests eager to develop its natural gas reserves.

The oil and gas industry is the bedrock of the Timorese economy and the main source of government revenue. Development of the promising offshore Greater Sunrise gas field, shared between Australia and East Timor, has been stalled for more than two decades — mainly over the question of which country the fuel should be piped to.

Timorese officials believe that piping gas into their country would deliver more benefits for their people despite the added logistical challenges. In an interview last week, President Jose Ramos-Horta said any alternative would have to be "a very persuasive proposal."

Francis, who is from Argentina and is history's first Latin American pope, has long railed against multinational companies that exploit poor countries for their natural resources for their own benefit without taking care to adequately compensate the local population or care for the environment.

"And don't go near those crocodiles because they bite, and bite a lot, a lot," Francis said Tuesday night, using a term in Spanish that means both "to bite" and to accept bribes.

The huge turnout in East Timor was a testament to the devout Catholic faith of its people and their reverence of the church, which strongly backed the Timorese' fight for independence. Francis praised the Timorese for having not only built up their country from scratch, but reconciled with Indonesia after securing independence in 2002.

One of the Timorese who campaigned for that independence, Fransisco Dionisio Fernandes, was a



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15-year-old acolyte at the Dili Mass celebrated by St. John Paul II on the same field as Francis.

He went on to become one of the most vocal pro-independence activists in East Timor, known locally by his nom de guerre Maukura. But he chose the path of nonviolent resistance rather than joining the guerrillas, preaching a message of reconciliation with Indonesia that Francis underscored during his visit.

"What's past is past, every nation certainly has its dark history, and we cannot erase history," Fernandes said in an interview. "East Timor has made a great effort to reconcile the wounds of the past and found a way to pursue a process of genuine reconciliation."

Fernandes, who became a career diplomat, said the focus was now on the future.

"Now is the time for Timorese to fight for the development and people's welfare. With the principle of mutual respect for each other's sovereignty, we rebuild together with Indonesia which is destined to be brothers."

East Timor remains one of the poorest in the world, with around 42% living below the poverty line. It struggles with high levels of unemployment and malnutrition. Nearly two-thirds of the country's citizens are under 30 years old, making youth job creation a high priority.

From Dili, Francis was flying to Singapore, one of Asia's economic powerhouses. The city-state's transformation from a colonial port lacking natural resources into an economic power since its independence from Malaysia in 1965 has long been touted as a success story.

It enjoys one of the highest living standards in the world, and is known for its safety and low crime rate. But it is also one of the most expensive cities to live in and its competitive work environment makes for a stressful, overworked people.

Francis has no official program in Singapore on Wednesday other than a private meeting with his Jesuit confreres.

## **Amid fears of storm surge and flooding, Hurricane Francine takes aim at Louisiana coast**

By SARA CLINE Associated Press

BATON ROUGE, La. (AP) — Hurricane Francine barreled early Wednesday toward Louisiana and is expected to make landfall in coming hours as forecasters raised threats of potentially deadly storm surge, widespread flooding and destructive winds on the northern U.S. Gulf coast.

Francine drew fuel from exceedingly warm Gulf of Mexico waters to jump from a tropical storm to a Category 1 hurricane on Tuesday night. The National Hurricane Center said Francine might even reach Category 2 strength with winds of 96 to 110 mph (155 to 175 kph) before crashing into a fragile coastal region that still hasn't fully recovered from a series of devastating hurricanes since 2020.

Louisiana Gov. Jeff Landry warned at midday Tuesday — when Francine was still a tropical storm — that residents around south Louisiana and in the heavily populated state capital of Baton Rouge and nearby New Orleans — should "batten down all the hatches" and finish last preparations before a 24-hour window to do so closed.

Once Francine makes landfall, Landry said, residents should stay in place rather than venture out into waterlogged roads and risk blocking first responders or utility crews working to repair power lines.

The governor said the Louisiana National Guard is being deployed to parishes that could be impacted by Francine. They are equipped with food, water, nearly 400 high-water vehicles, about 100 boats and 50 helicopters to respond to the storm, including possible search-and-rescue operations.

Francine was centered Wednesday morning about 245 miles (395 kilometers) southwest of Morgan City, Louisiana, and was moving northeast at 10 mph (17 kph) with maximum sustained winds of 90 mph (150 kmh), the Miami-based hurricane center said. Some additional strengthening is expected Wednesday morning and then Francine is expected to weaken quickly after it moves inland.

A hurricane warning was in effect along the Louisiana coast from Cameron eastward to Grand Isle, about 50 miles (80 kilometers) south of New Orleans, according to the center. A storm surge warning stretched from the Mississippi-Alabama border to the Alabama-Florida border. Such a warning means there's a chance

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of life-threatening flooding.

In downtown New Orleans, cars and trucks were lined up for blocks on Tuesday to collect sandbags from the parking lot of a local YMCA. CEO Erika Mann said Tuesday that 1,000 bags of sand had already been distributed by volunteers later in the day to people hoping to protect homes from possible flooding.

One resident picking up sandbags was Wayne Grant, 33, who moved to New Orleans last year and was nervous for his first potential hurricane in the city. The low-lying rental apartment he shares with his partner had already flooded out in a storm the year before and he was not taking any chances this time around.

"It was like a kick in the face, we've been trying to stay up on the weather ever since," Grant said. "We're super invested in the place, even though it's not ours."

Francine is the sixth named storm of the Atlantic hurricane season. There's a danger of life-threatening storm surge as well as damaging hurricane-force winds, said Brad Reinhart, a senior hurricane specialist at the hurricane center.

There's also the potential for 4 to 8 inches (10 to 20 centimeters) of rain with the possibility of 12 inches (30 centimeters) locally across much of Louisiana and Mississippi through Friday morning, Reinhart said.

The hurricane center said parts of Mississippi, Alabama and the Florida Panhandle were at risk of "considerable" flash and urban flooding starting Wednesday, followed by a threat of possible flooding later in the week into the lower Mississippi Valley and lower Tennessee Valley as the soggy remnants of Francine sweep inland.

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.

A little over three years after Ida trashed his home in the Dulac community of coastal Louisiana's Terrebonne Parish – and about a month after he finished rebuilding – Coy Verdin was preparing for another hurricane.

"We had to gut the whole house," he recalled in a telephone interview, rattling off a memorized inventory of the work, including a new roof and new windows.

Verdin, 55, strongly considered moving farther inland, away from the home where he makes his living on nearby Bayou Grand Caillou. After rebuilding, he said he's there to stay.

"As long as I can. It's getting rough, though," he said.

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. They 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.

## **Blinken and Lammy arrive in Kyiv as Ukraine pushes for long-range strikes against Russia**

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and British Foreign Secretary David Lammy arrived in Kyiv on a joint visit Wednesday, as Ukraine presses the West to allow it to use long-range missiles against Russia.

The top diplomats reached the Ukrainian capital by train hours after the U.S. presidential debate during which Vice President Kamala Harris and former President Trump sparred over the 2 1/2-year war in Ukraine.

Blinken traveled from London, where he accused Iran of providing Russia with Fath-360 short-range ballistic missiles, calling the move a "dramatic escalation" of the war.

For months, Ukraine has been requesting approval to use long-range weapons from the United States and Western allies to strike targets in Russia, and is expected to press harder given Russia's latest reported weapons acquisition.

"If we are allowed to destroy military targets or weapons prepared by the enemy for attacks on Ukraine, it would certainly bring more safety for our civilians, our people, and our children," Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal said at a news conference in Kyiv on Tuesday. "We are working towards this and will

continue to push for it every day.”

Referring to the missiles from Iran, he added: “Russia’s use of weapons from its terrorist allies to strike at Ukraine continues their genocidal war and terrorism on our territory. We must be able to respond to such terrorism in kind by destroying military targets on their territory to ensure greater safety for our citizens.”

Wednesday’s visit comes ahead of British Prime Minister Keir Starmer’s upcoming trip to Washington, where he will meet President Joe Biden at the White House on Friday.

Russian airstrikes, mostly aimed at crippling Ukraine’s energy infrastructure, have intensified in recent weeks with nightly missile and drone attacks. \_\_\_\_\_

Follow AP’s coverage of the war in Ukraine at <https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine>

## Israel-Hamas war latest: Israeli airstrikes on Palestinian territories kill dozens more

By The Associated Press undefined

Israeli strikes on Palestinian territories have killed more than two-dozen Palestinians on Wednesday, according to local officials. They say an Israeli airstrike killed five Palestinians in the occupied West Bank, and at least 20 people, including 16 women and children, were killed in the Gaza Strip.

Gaza’s Health Ministry says Tuesday’s strike on a tent camp in an Israeli-designated humanitarian zone killed at least 19 people.

The Health Ministry says over 40,000 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza since the Israel-Hamas war began. It does not differentiate between fighters and civilians in its count. The war has caused vast destruction and displaced around 90% of Gaza’s population of 2.3 million, often multiple times.

Hamas-led militants killed some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, in their Oct. 7 attack that sparked the war. They abducted another 250 and are still holding around 100. Around a third of them are believed to be dead.

Here’s the latest:

Fuel tanker crashes into a bus stop in West Bank, injuring a man in what Israeli officials say was an attack  
JERUSALEM — A fuel tanker crashed into a bus stop in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, seriously injuring one person in what Israeli officials said was an attack.

The Israeli military said the driver was “neutralized” at the scene after the incident on Wednesday. It did not immediately identify the driver or provide evidence that the crash was an attack.

The Magen David Adom rescue service said it was treating the man who was injured, saying he is in critical condition.

Palestinians have carried out a number of stabbing, shooting and car-ramming attacks against Israelis in recent years. The army carries out near-daily raids into Palestinian communities in the West Bank that it says are aimed at dismantling militant groups and preventing attacks.

The violence has escalated since Hamas’ Oct. 7 attack ignited the war in Gaza.

Gaza polio vaccination campaign has reached over 82% of targeted children, Palestinian health officials say  
RAMALLAH, West Bank — The Palestinian Health Ministry in the West Bank says an ongoing polio vaccination campaign in the Gaza Strip has reached 82.5% of targeted children.

The ministry said on Wednesday that 527,776 children under the age of 10 have received the first dose of the vaccine across the war-ravaged enclave.

The campaign began earlier this month after the detection of the first confirmed polio case in Gaza in 25 years. It aims at vaccinating about 640,000 children there.

Israel agreed to limited humanitarian pauses to facilitate the campaign, according to the World Health Organization, and there have been no major disruptions from the ongoing war.

The Palestinian Health Ministry in the Israeli-occupied West Bank is part of the Palestinian Authority, whose forces were driven out of Gaza when Hamas seized power there in 2007 and set up its own government.

The two Palestinian health ministries coordinate with one another and exchange information.

Israeli military helicopter crashes in a non-combat-related incident overnight in Gaza, killing 2 soldiers



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TEL AVIV, Israel — The Israeli military says two Israeli soldiers died and seven were injured when their helicopter crashed in the southern Gaza Strip.

The military said Wednesday that the overnight helicopter crash was not the result of enemy fire and is under investigation. The helicopter was on a mission to evacuate wounded soldiers from Gaza for treatment in Israeli hospitals.

There have been 340 Israeli soldiers killed since the ground operation began in Gaza in late October, at least 50 of whom have been killed in accidents within Gaza — not as a result of combat with Palestinian militants, according to the military.

Dozens of Palestinian patients expected to leave Gaza through an Israeli crossing, heading to the UAE for medical care

JERUSALEM — An Israeli official says dozens of Palestinian patients were expected to leave the Gaza Strip on Wednesday by way of an Israeli crossing, in order to travel to the United Arab Emirates for medical care.

The official says over 200 people, mostly children, are expected to leave, along with relatives to accompany them. It is the biggest exit of medical patients through Israel since the war erupted nearly a year ago.

Gaza has been completely sealed off since May, when Israeli forces captured the Gaza side of the border with Egypt, including the Rafah crossing between Egypt and the coastal strip, leading to its closure. Rafah had been the only entry or exit point for Palestinians, including medical patients, since the start of the war.

Since then, Israel has only allowed a small number of children and accompanying relatives to leave for medical treatment.

Israel's military offensive, launched in response to Hamas' Oct. 7 attack, has gutted Gaza's already fragile health system. With few exceptions, Israel has barred Gaza's Palestinians from entering Israel throughout the war.

The official says the patients are leaving through the Kerem Shalom crossing and heading to the Ramon airport in southern Israel, where they will board a flight to the UAE.

The official spoke on condition of anonymity pending a formal announcement by Israeli authorities.

— By Josef Federman in Jerusalem;

In his first statement as Hamas' top leader, Yahya Sinwar thanks Algeria for its support

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip — Hamas released the first public statement from Yahya Sinwar since he was appointed its overall leader in August.

In the written statement late Tuesday, Sinwar congratulated Algeria's President Abdelmadjid Tebboune on his reelection and thanked the country for its support for the Palestinian cause. Algeria, the Arab representative on the United Nations Security Council, circulated a draft resolution in May demanding an immediate cease-fire in Gaza and a halt to Israel's military operation in the southern city of Rafah.

A hard-liner within Hamas, Sinwar would have to approve any potential agreement for a cease-fire and hostage release. The United States, Qatar and Egypt have spent most of the year trying to broker such a deal but the negotiations have repeatedly stalled.

Sinwar was one of the architects of the Oct. 7 attack into Israel that ignited the war in Gaza. He has not been seen since the start of the war and is believed to be alive and hiding inside the territory. Israel has vowed to kill him.

Israeli strike kills 5 Palestinians in the West Bank, officials say

RAMALLAH, West Bank — An Israeli airstrike has killed five Palestinians in the occupied West Bank, Palestinian officials say.

The Israeli military said it targeted a group of militants in the northern city of Tubas early Wednesday.

The Palestinian Health Ministry in the West Bank confirmed the toll but does not say whether those killed by Israeli fire are militants or civilians.

Israel has stepped up its military raids across the territory in recent weeks and says it is working to dismantle militant groups and prevent attacks. Palestinians say such operations are aimed at cementing Israel's seemingly open-ended military rule over the territory.

Israel captured the West Bank, along with east Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip, in the 1967 Mideast war.

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The Palestinians want all three territories for their future state. The West Bank has seen a surge in violence since Hamas' Oct. 7 attack out of Gaza ignited the war there.

Israeli airstrikes on the Gaza Strip add at least 20 to the death toll, authorities say

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip — Palestinian officials say Israeli airstrikes in the Gaza Strip have killed at least 20 people, including 16 women and children.

An airstrike early Wednesday killed 11 people, including six siblings ranging from 21 months to 21 years old, according to the European Hospital, which received the casualties. The dead from the strike near the southern city of Khan Younis included three other women, a child and a man, according to the hospital.

A strike late Tuesday on a home in the urban Jabaliya refugee camp in northern Gaza killed nine people, including six women and children, according to the Gaza Health Ministry and the Civil Defense first responders. The Civil Defense says the home belonged to Akram al-Najjar, a professor at the al-Quds Open University, who survived the strike.

Israel says it only targets militants, claiming 17,000 militant deaths without providing evidence. It blames civilian deaths on Hamas because its fighters are embedded in dense residential neighborhoods. The military rarely comments on individual strikes, which often kill women and children.

The Health Ministry says Israel's offensive, launched in response to Hamas' Oct. 7 attack, has killed at least 41,020 Palestinians in Gaza and wounded nearly 95,000. It does not distinguish between fighters and civilians but says more than half of those killed were women and children.

Hamas-led militants killed some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, on Oct. 7 and abducted around 250. Around 100 hostages are still held in Gaza, about a third of whom are believed to be dead.

## US inflation likely fell further last month as Fed prepares to cut rates next week

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Inflation in the United States may have hit a three-year low in August, underscoring that the rate of price increases is falling back to pre-pandemic levels and clearing the way for the Federal Reserve to start cutting its key interest rate next week.

Year-over-year inflation is thought to have slowed to 2.6% last month, according to a survey of economists by the data provider FactSet. That would be the lowest such rate since March 2021. And excluding volatile food and energy prices, core inflation is believed to have remained unchanged at 3.2%.

Inflation peaked at 9.1% in June 2022 — a four-decade high — as the economy rebounded from the pandemic recession with unexpected speed and strength. The Fed responded with 11 rate hikes in 2022 and 2023, raising its key rate to a 23-year high and making loans much more expensive across the economy.

The latest inflation figures could inject themselves into the presidential race in its final weeks. Former President Donald Trump has heaped blame on Vice President Kamala Harris for the jump in inflation, which erupted in early 2021 as global supply chains seized up, causing severe shortages of parts and labor. Harris has proposed subsidies for home buyers and builders in an effort to ease housing costs and supports a federal ban on price-gouging for groceries. Trump has said he would boost energy production to try to reduce overall inflation.

Fed officials have signaled that they're increasingly confident that inflation is steadily falling back to their 2% target and are now shifting their focus to supporting the job market, which is rapidly cooling. The Fed's mandate is to seek stable prices and maximum employment.

Reductions in the Fed's benchmark rate should, over time, reduce the cost of consumer and business borrowing, including for mortgages, auto loans and credit cards.

"Overall, I see significant and ongoing progress toward the (Fed's) inflation goal that I expect will continue over the remainder of this year," Christopher Waller, a key policymaker on the Fed's Board of Governors, said last week.

Waller noted that for more than half the goods and services that the government tracks, annual inflation has fallen below 2.5%, a sign that price increases are broadly slowing.

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A big reason why inflation likely fell last month is that gas prices tumbled by about 10 cents a gallon in August, according to the Energy Inflation Administration, to a national average of about \$3.29.

Economists also expect the government's measures of grocery prices and rents to rise more slowly. Though food prices are roughly 20% more expensive than before the pandemic, they are up just 1.1% from a year ago.

Another potential driver of slower inflation is that the cost of new apartment leases has started to cool as a stream of newly built apartments have been completed.

According to the real estate brokerage Redfin, the median rent for a new lease rose just 0.9% in August from a year earlier, to \$1,645 a month. But the government's measure includes all rents, including those for people who have been in their apartments for months or years. It takes time for the slowdown in new rents to show up in the government's data. In July, rental costs rose 5.1% from a year ago, according to the government's consumer price index.

Americans' paychecks are also growing more slowly — an average of about 3.5% annually, still a solid pace — which reduces inflationary pressures. Two years ago, wage growth was topping 5%, a level that can force businesses to sharply raise prices to cover their higher labor costs.

In a high-profile speech last month, Fed Chair Jerome Powell noted that inflation was coming under control and suggested that the job market was unlikely to be a source of inflationary pressure.

As a result, the Fed is poised to begin cutting its key rate when it meets next week in hopes of bolstering growth and hiring. Consumers have propelled the economy for the past three years. But they are increasingly turning to debt to maintain their spending and credit card, and auto delinquencies are rising, raising concerns that they may have to rein in their spending soon. Reduced consumer spending could lead more employers to freeze their hiring or even cut jobs.

"We do not seek or welcome further cooling in labor market conditions," Powell said.

The Fed is widely expected to cut its benchmark rate by a modest quarter-point next week, though it's possible that its policymakers could instead decide that a half-point reduction is needed. Wall Street traders envision a half-point rate cut at the Fed's subsequent meeting in November, according to futures prices.

## The US-Russia battle for influence in Africa plays out in Central African Republic

By SAM MEDNICK Associated Press

BANGUI, Central African Republic (AP) — Hours after Russian mercenary leader Yevgeny Prigozhin rebelled against his country's top military leaders, his private army's biggest client in Africa panicked, turning for help to his foe in the West.

Officials from Central African Republic, where some 1,500 of Prigozhin's shadowy Wagner Group mercenaries were stationed, wrote a letter that day, requesting to "rapidly" arrange a meeting with a private U.S. security firm to discuss collaboration.

Dated June 23, 2023, the day Prigozhin launched the armed rebellion, the letter sparked a series of private meetings, culminating in a deal with the central African nation and Bancroft Global Development. That sparked backlash from Russian mercenaries, according to a dozen diplomats, locals, and analysts.

The tensions in Central African Republic are a window into a larger battle playing out across the continent as Moscow and Washington vie for influence.

The Russian mercenaries — using success in staving off rebels in this impoverished nation as a model for expansion — have long been accused by locals and rights groups of stripping natural resources such as minerals and timber and are linked to the torture and death of civilians. In the wake of Prigozhin's rebellion and suspicious death in a plane crash, the Russians are recalibrating their Africa operations. The United States, which has been largely disengaged from the region for years, is attempting to maintain a presence and stymie Russian gains as it pushes African countries to distance themselves from the mercenaries.

U.S. officials blame Russia for anti-American sentiment in the region and say they're trying to shift the



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narrative.

"If the U.S. can't regain a foothold, it could give Russia greater economic and political leverage," said Samuel Ramani of the Royal United Services Institute, a defense and security think tank. "If Russia loses Central African Republic, its flagship model on the continent, there could be a domino effect in other countries."

Russia's influence

In recent years, Russia has emerged as the security partner of choice for a growing number of governments in the region, displacing traditional allies such as France and the U.S.

Moscow aggressively expanded its military cooperation by using mercenaries like Wagner, who have operated in at least half a dozen countries since around 2017. They're tasked with protecting African leaders and in some cases helping fight rebels and extremists.

They're also plagued by their human rights record. Two years ago in Mali, Wagner and the army were accused of executing about 300 men — some suspected of being Islamist extremists, but most civilians — in what Human Rights Watch called the worst single atrocity reported in the country's decade-long armed conflict. And in Central African Republic, mercenaries train the army on torture tactics, including how to cut hands, remove nails, throw fuel and burn people alive, according to watchdog The Sentry.

A soldier who spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of reprisal confirmed torture tactics and told The Associated Press he saw mercenaries put a fellow soldier into a sweltering container as punishment. He said people could stay locked in containers for three weeks, with many dying inside.

Central African Republic was one of the first places the mercenaries entered. The country has been in conflict since 2013, when predominantly Muslim rebels seized power and forced the president from office. Six of the 14 armed groups that signed a 2019 peace deal later left the agreement. Locals and the government credited Wagner with fighting back rebels who tried to overtake Bangui, the capital, in 2021. The Russians soon expanded to Burkina Faso and Niger, and have ambitions for further growth.

Russia is refurbishing a military base some 50 miles (80 kilometers) from Bangui. Alexander Bikantov, Russia's ambassador to Central African Republic, said the base will improve the country's security.

Fidele Gouandjika, adviser to President Faustin-Archange Touadera, said the base aims to have 10,000 fighters by 2030 to engage with more African nations.

Some countries see Russia's influence as a threat to their own, but conflict analysts say weakening it will be challenging if they won't offer a similar force to pursue armed groups.

Wagner is steeped in Central African Republic's security system, and experts say that will likely prevent Touadera from easily diversifying security partners.

Touadera's office didn't reply to written requests for comment for this story. His adviser to the country's spy agency declined to be interviewed.

Pressure from the United States

The U.S. had been pushing Central African Republic to find an alternative to Wagner for years. A December 2022 private meeting sought ways to improve security without the mercenaries but yielded little tangible progress, according to a U.S. official who is familiar with the talks and spoke on condition of anonymity due to the privacy of ongoing discussions.

"We never really got past the confidence-building steps," he said. "Steps on how XYZ would replace Wagner were abstract, and the door remains open."

The more assertive U.S. approach came as it faced new setbacks and tried to rework agreements in the region. Its troops left Chad and Niger, where they were no longer welcome.

Still, the State Department said in a statement early this year that it wasn't involved in the decision to establish Bancroft Global Development's presence in Central African Republic.

But Washington could deny such contracts if it wanted, said Sean McFate, a former contractor in Africa and author of "The New Rules of War."

The U.S. has used private military companies to reduce American "boots on the ground" in Africa, McFate said, and companies like Bancroft have to play by Washington's rules if they want future government work.

In response to AP questions, the U.S. official who spoke on condition of anonymity said it uses private

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contractors in Africa to help countries operate more effectively, with U.S. government oversight to ensure accountability. The official said the State Department has overseen Bancroft's work in Somalia but not Central African Republic or elsewhere.

## Bancroft's background

Washington-based Bancroft is a nonprofit working in nine countries — five of them in Africa. Its longest-standing presence is in Somalia, where it's operated for more than 15 years, in part training troops to fight the militant group al-Shabab.

Bancroft's involvement in Central African Republic has been shrouded in secrecy since signs emerged of its presence last fall.

During an AP visit months later, rumors swirled about Bancroft's activities, fueling speculation the U.S. was bringing its own Wagner to oust Russia.

But according to Bancroft founder Michael Stock, the group entered at Bangui's behest.

"Touadera felt his Russian partners were underperforming and distracted, focused too much on other lines of effort ranging from breweries to cultural centers, rather than confronting the rebels," Stock told AP in his first interview since Bancroft began operating there.

Touadera thought diversifying partners would prompt Russia to get in line and give the Americans what they wanted, Stock said.

Stock received the letter from the presidency within a day of Prigozhin's mutiny, and the two signed a deal in September, he said.

Fewer than 30 Bancroft personnel work there, Stock said, helping Central African Republic with intelligence systems, interagency cooperation and law enforcement.

Bancroft has invested some \$1.4 million there, Stock said.

Much of Bancroft's overall funding has come from U.S. and United Nations grants. From 2018 to 2020, it received more than \$43 million from the U.S., according to audits required as part of tax forms.

Amal Ali, former U.S. intelligence analyst, is among critics who say that despite its yearslong presence in Somalia, Bancroft hasn't contributed to any real eradication of terrorism.

Stock dismissed such comments as uninformed and said the Somali and U.S. governments "agree Bancroft has done a great deal to damaging illegal armed groups and developing the capacity of the government to perform its national defense functions professionally."

## Backlash on the ground

Rights groups say a lack of transparency about Bancroft's operations has fostered an atmosphere of distrust in a country already rampant with armed actors. Wagner, a U.N. peacekeeping mission and Rwandan troops are all on the ground to try to quell violence.

"Operating in a vague and nontransparent way in the Central African Republic only leads to suspicion," said Lewis Mudge, of Human Rights Watch.

Stock defended Bancroft's work and policies. "It is perfectly normal for a government not to publicize how it is defending the people and the state," he told AP.

Last fall, as reports of possible collaboration with Bancroft emerged, Stock said he positioned a staff member at a hotel in Bangui to wait for Russia's reaction.

"We expected Russia to freak out, so for our lone staff member in Bangui we chose a Russian speaker, who was tasked to do nothing but sit in the hotel garden reading a book all day, waiting for Russians to show whether they wanted to be cooperative, hostile, or ignore us," Stock said.

Stock said that weeks later, in January, the employee was detained and questioned for hours by Russian forces and released only when Touadera stepped in.

Officials in both Central African Republic and Russia didn't respond to requests for comment on any such incident. Bikantov, Russia's ambassador to Central African Republic, has said Bancroft's presence had no effect on cooperation with Russia's military.

In the following months, aggression toward Americans and U.S. entities continued. Several American citizens were detained and had their passports confiscated, a diplomat who dealt with their cases said

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on condition of anonymity because he wasn't allowed to speak to reporters. Rare anti-American protests erupted outside the U.S. embassy in Bangui, and local youths formed the Committee to Investigate U.S. Activities to monitor Bancroft's movements.

Gouandjika, the presidential adviser, said the government has no problem with Americans and those denied entry lacked proper paperwork.

Unclear future

As the U.S. and Russia jockey for power, African governments say they want to make their own choices.

Central African Republic officials approached Bancroft, which shows that these governments haven't become Russian puppets, said Jack Margolin, an expert on private military companies.

But, he added, Russia's reaction to Bancroft could hurt Moscow's standing with other nations.

After Prigozhin's death, Russia moved quickly to take control of Wagner's assets, and the defense ministry told countries where Wagner operated that it would take over. The country and its military intelligence arm have taken a more direct role in Africa operations, deploying more official detachments from its army.

Russia is trying to rebrand the mercenaries, creating Africa Corps, a parallel group that could absorb Wagner, said John Lechner, a Wagner expert.

In Central African Republic, it's still unclear how much sway the Russian state has with the mercenaries, who are beloved by many and embedded in society, brewing beer and visiting markets. Still, they largely keep to themselves, walking through streets with faces covered and driving in unmarked cars.

For many, Prigozhin was a national hero. Standing at a downtown monument of Russian soldiers, people lay flowers at its feet paying respects, a year after his death.

For most people here, there's little interest in squabbles among foreign nations.

"There are problems between the Americans and Russians, but that doesn't matter to us," said Jean Louis Yet, who works at Bangui's market. "We are here working, trying our best to make a living.

"All we want is security."

## 'Hellish' scene unfolds as wildfire races toward California mountain community

By EUGENE GARCIA and THOMAS PEIPERT Associated Press

TRABUCO CANYON, Calif. (AP) — Alex Luna, a 20-year-old missionary, saw the sky turn from a cherry red to black in about 90 minutes as an explosive wildfire raced toward the Southern California mountain community of Wrightwood and authorities implored residents to leave their belongings behind and get out of town.

"It was very, I would say, hellish-like," Luna said Tuesday night. "It was very just dark. Not a good place to be at that moment. ... Ash was falling from the sky like if it was snowing."

Luna was among those who heeded the evacuation order that was issued for the community of about 4,500 in the San Gabriel Mountains east of Los Angeles. The Bridge Fire is one of three major wildfires burning in Southern California and endangering tens of thousands of homes and other structures.

The fires sprung to life during a triple-digit heat wave that finally broke Wednesday. The cooler temperatures brought the prospect of firefighters finally making headway against the flames.

Other major fires were burning across the West, including in Idaho, Oregon and Nevada, where about 20,000 people had to flee a blaze outside Reno.

In Northern California, a fire that started Sunday burned at least 30 homes and commercial buildings and destroyed 40 to 50 vehicles in Clearlake City, 110 miles (117 kilometers) north of San Francisco. Roughly 4,000 people were forced to evacuate.

California is only now heading into the teeth of the wildfire season but already has seen nearly three times as much acreage burn than during all of 2023.

Evacuation orders were expanded Tuesday night in Southern California as the fires grew and included parts of the popular ski town of Big Bear. Some 65,600 homes and buildings were under threat by the Line Fire, including those under mandatory evacuations and those under evacuation warnings, nearly double



the number from the previous day.

Residents along the southern edge of Big Bear Lake were told to leave the area, which is a popular destination for anglers, bikers and hikers. The blaze had charred more than 51 square miles (132 square kilometers) of grass and brush and blanketed the area with a thick cloud of dark smoke .

The acid air prompted several districts in the area to close schools through the end of the week because of safety concerns. Three firefighters have been injured since the blaze was reported Thursday, state fire managers said.

For Wrightwood, a picturesque town 60 miles (97 kilometers) east of Los Angeles known for its 1930s cabins. threatening wildfires have become a regular part of life. Authorities expressed frustration in 2016 when only half the residents heeded orders to leave.

Janice Quick, the president of the Wrightwood Chamber of Commerce, lives a few miles outside town. Late Tuesday afternoon she was eating lunch outside with friends and they were rained on by embers the size of her thumbnail that hit the table and made a clinking sound.

A friend texted to tell her that the friend's home had been consumed by fire, while another friend was watching through her ring camera as embers rained down on her home.

"I've never seen anything like this and I've been through fires before," said Quick, who has lived in Wrightwood for 45 years.

In neighboring Orange County, firefighters used bulldozers, helicopters and planes to control a rapidly spreading blaze called the Airport Fire that started Monday and spread to about 3 square miles (8 square kilometers) in only a few hours. The blaze was ignited by a spark from heavy equipment being used by public workers, officials said.

By Tuesday night, it had charred more than 30 square miles (78 square kilometers) and was heading over mountainous terrain into neighboring Riverside County with no containment, said Orange County Fire Authority Capt. Steve Concialdi. It burned some communications towers on top of a peak, though so far officials said they did not have reports of the damage disrupting police or fire communication signals in the area.

Concialdi said the fire was burning away from homes in Orange County, but there are 36 recreational cabins in the area. He said authorities don't yet know if the cabins were damaged or destroyed by the blaze.

Two firefighters who suffered heat-related injuries and a resident who suffered from smoke inhalation were treated at a hospital and released.

Sherri Fankhauser, her husband and her daughter set up lawn chairs and were watching helicopters make water drops on a flaming hillside a few hundred yards away from their Trabuco Canyon home on Tuesday.

They didn't evacuate even though their street had been under a mandatory evacuation order since Monday. A neighbor did help Fankhauser's 89-year-old mother-in-law evacuate, Fankhauser said. The flames died down last night but flared up again in the morning.

"You can see fire coming over the ridge now," Fankhauser said Tuesday afternoon. "It's getting a little scarier now."

## **Harris presses a more forceful case against Trump than Biden did on abortion, economy and democracy**

By ZEKE MILLER, MICHELLE L. PRICE, JILL COLVIN and JOSH BOAK Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Kamala Harris pressed a forceful case against Donald Trump on Tuesday in their first and perhaps only debate before the presidential election, repeatedly goading him in an event that showcased their starkly different visions for the country on abortion, immigration and American democracy.

The Democratic vice president provoked Trump with reminders about the 2020 election loss that he still denies, delivered derisive asides at his false claims and sought to underscore the Republican former president's role in the Supreme Court's overturning of a national right to abortion two years ago. Trump tore into Harris as too liberal and a continuation of Biden's unpopular administration, as he launched into

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the sort of freewheeling personal attacks and digressions from which his advisers and supporters have tried to steer him away.

Less than two months from Election Day and hours before the first early ballots will begin to be mailed Wednesday in Alabama, the debate offered the clearest look yet at a presidential race that has been repeatedly upended.

Harris' performance by nearly every measure seemed to be the opposite of President Joe Biden's in June, with sharp, focused answers designed to showcase the contrast between her and Trump, whereas Biden at times was muddled, halting and incoherent. Harris used her body language and facial expressions to confront Trump and express that she found his answers ridiculous, amusing or both — a pronounced change from Biden's slack-jawed expression when Trump attacked him.

Harris appeared intent on casting herself as a relief for voters seeking a break from Trump's acerbic politics — a contrast highlighted as Trump appeared to be set on his back foot by her needling.

In one moment, Harris turned to Trump and said that as vice president, she had spoken to foreign leaders who "are laughing at Donald Trump," and said she had spoken to military leaders, "and they say you're a disgrace."

As Trump, 78, again questioned her racial identity, the 59-year-old Harris, the first woman, Black person and person of South Asian descent to serve as vice president, pointedly gestured to Trump and responded, "I think the American people want better than that, want better than this."

Trump in turn tried to link Harris to the still-unpopular Biden, questioning why she hadn't acted on her proposed ideas while serving as vice president. Trump also focused his attacks on Harris over her assignment by Biden to deal with the root causes of illegal migration.

"Why hasn't she done it? She's been there for three and a half years," he said.

Harris promised tax cuts aimed at the middle class and said she would push to restore a federally guaranteed right to abortion overturned by the Supreme Court two years ago. Trump said his proposed tariffs would help the U.S. stop being cheated by allies on trade and said he would work to swiftly end the Russia-Ukraine war — though he twice refused to say he believed it was in America's interest for Ukraine, which bipartisan majorities in Congress have backed, to win the war.

Trump again denied that he lost to Biden four years ago, when a mob of his supporters stormed the U.S. Capitol to try to stop the certification of his loss based on false or unsubstantiated claims of voter fraud. He tried to reverse the question of threats to American democracy and suggested criticism of him could be linked to the assassination attempt he survived in July.

"I probably took a bullet to the head because of the things that they say about me," he said. "They talk about democracy, I'm a threat to democracy. They're the threat to democracy."

Trump has in recent days ramped up his threats of retribution if he returns to the White House, saying he would prosecute lawyers, donors, and other officials whom he deems to "cheat" in the election.

"Donald Trump was fired by 81 million people," Harris said, "So let's be clear about that. And clearly he is having a very difficult time processing that."

Her campaign ended the debate by expressing openness to another meeting in October — and welcomed an endorsement from megastar Taylor Swift, who labeled herself a "childless cat lady" in a dig at Trump's running mate, Ohio Sen. JD Vance, as she encouraged her fans to vote.

Harris defends shifts to the center, puts abortion front and center

Harris 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.

Asked about her changing positions on a number of issues, she twice repeated a phrase she has used to try to explain it away, saying, "My values have not changed."

Trump, meanwhile, quickly went after Harris for abandoning some of her past liberal positions and said: "She's going to my philosophy now. In fact, I was going to send her a MAGA hat." Harris smiled broadly and laughed.

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Harris, in zeroing in on one of Trump's biggest electoral vulnerabilities, laid the end of a federally guaranteed right to abortion at Trump's feet for his role in appointing three U.S. Supreme Court justices who overturned Roe v. Wade, leaving more than 20 states in the country with what she called "Trump abortion bans."

Harris gave one of her most impassioned answers as she described the ways women have been denied abortion care and other emergency care since that ruling, and said Trump would sign a national abortion ban if he wins.

Trump declared it "a lie," and said, "I'm not signing a ban and there's no reason to sign a ban."

The Republican has said he wants the issue left to the states.

Trump, who 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, continued to call Harris a "Marxist" and said, "Everyone knows she's a Marxist."

Harris' eyebrows shot up and she made an amused face, bringing her hand to her chin and staring at him.

Trump leaned on familiar falsehoods and signaled a shift on Ukraine

Trump attacked Harris for the inflation seen under the Biden-Harris administration, a major liability for the vice president. He quickly turned his answer to warning about immigrants coming into the country — one of the subjects he's focused on most heavily in his campaign.

He called his proposed tariffs a straightforward way to make other countries pay up for what he has long argued is an imbalance that hurts the U.S. Harris called the tariffs an effective national sales tax. Trump reacted swiftly and called that "an incorrect statement."

Throughout his campaign, Trump has leaned on illegal immigration, an issue that has bedeviled Biden and Harris with rising numbers of illegal border crossings and the arrivals of thousands of people needing shelter in Democratic-led cities. He accused Democrats of abetting large numbers of unauthorized crossings — though they have dropped in recent months in part due to new asylum restrictions by the Biden administration.

But as he often does in his rallies and on his social media account, Trump reeled off a series of falsehoods or unproven claims about migrants. One of those claims was a debunked rumor that Trump and his allies have spread online in recent days, alleging Haitian immigrants in an Ohio town are hunting and eating pets. Officials in Springfield, Ohio, say they have no evidence of that happening.

"Talk about extreme," Harris said after Trump talked about dogs and cats being eaten.

Harris' expressions filled their split-screen

As the debate opened, Harris walked up to Trump's lectern to introduce herself, marking the first time the two had ever met, since Trump skipped her 2021 inauguration. "Kamala Harris," she said, extending her hand to Trump, who received it in a handshake — the first presidential debate handshake since the 2016 campaign.

Trump has at times resorted to invoking racial and gender stereotypes and falsely claiming that Harris, who attended a historically Black university, hid her race during her career.

"I read where she was not Black," Trump said when asked about comments questioning Harris' race, adding a minute later, "and then I read that she was Black." He seemed to suggest her race was a choice, saying twice, "That's up to her."

"I think it's a tragedy that we have someone who wants to be president who has consistently over the course of his career attempted to use race to divide the American people," Harris responded.

While Tuesday's meeting might be the last time the candidates cross paths on the debate stage, they may cross paths again Wednesday when they both mark the 23rd anniversary of the 9/11 attacks. Harris, Trump and Biden plan to all be at ground zero in lower Manhattan and the Flight 93 National Memorial near Shanksville, Pennsylvania, on Wednesday. Harris and Biden will also visit the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia, later in the day for a ceremony there.

Trump at one point launched into an attack on Biden, questioning his mental acuity by making the claim that Biden "doesn't even know he's alive."

Harris quickly tried to turn it around to make Trump look less than sharp.



"First of all, I think it's important to remind the former president, you're not running against Joe Biden. You're running against me," she said.

## Key takeaways from a debate that featured tense clashes and closed with a Taylor Swift endorsement

By STEVE PEOPLES, JONATHAN J. COOPER and NICHOLAS RICCARDI Associated Press  
WASHINGTON (AP) — Donald Trump and Kamala Harris faced each other on the debate stage Tuesday night for the first — and possibly the last — time.

The Democratic vice president opened the faceoff with a power move, marching across the stage to Trump's lectern to shake his hand.

"Kamala Harris," she said, introducing herself as the pair met for the first time ever. "Let's have a good debate."

"Nice to see you. Have fun," the former Republican president responded.

The exchange set the tone for the 90-minute debate to come: Harris controlled the conversation at times, baiting Trump with jabs at his economic policy, his refusal to concede his 2020 election loss and even his performance at his rallies.

Trump, while measured early on, grew more annoyed as the night went on. And one significant moment played out after the two candidates left the stage, when megastar Taylor Swift said she'll vote for Harris.

Some takeaways on a historic debate:

From the opening handshake, Harris took the fight to Trump in a way that Biden could not

In her first answer, the former prosecutor said Trump's tariffs would effectively create a sales tax on the middle class. She soon accused Trump of presiding over the worst attack on American democracy since the Civil War — the Capitol riot on Jan. 6, 2021. She charged him with telling women what they could do with their bodies. And she mocked Trump's praise of dictators "who would eat you for lunch."

Harris effectively controlled much of the conversation with such attacks and baited Trump into responses that were at times vents, and at others, reminders of his wild rhetoric and fixation on the past.

"You did in fact lose that election," Harris said of the 2020 race that Trump lost to Democrat Joe Biden but still insists he won. "Donald Trump was fired by 81 million people," she said, referring to Biden's winning vote total.

But Harris may have got under her opponent's skin the most when she went after his performance at his rallies, noting that people often leave early.

Growing visibly irritated, Trump insisted that his rallies were larger than hers.

A smiling Harris frequently shifted her message from Trump back to the American people.

"You will not hear him talk about your needs, your dreams and your needs and your desires," Harris said. "And I'll tell you, I believe you deserve a president who actually puts you first."

Trump had a label for Harris: 'She is Biden'

Trump was often on defense, but he did drive the core message of his campaign: Inflation and immigration are hammering Americans.

Immigrants, Trump said, have "destroyed the fabric of our country."

He repeatedly tied Harris to Biden.

"She is Biden," he said.

"The worst inflation we've ever had," Trump added. "A horrible economy because inflation has made it so bad. And she can't get away with that."

Harris responded: "Clearly, I am not Joe Biden and I am certainly not Donald Trump. And what I do offer is a new generation of leadership for our country."

Trump also went after Harris for moving away from some of the progressive positions she took in the 2020 Democratic presidential primary, urging voters not to believe the more moderate tone she's striking in this campaign.

"She's going to my philosophy now. In fact, I was going to send her a MAGA hat," he said, referring to

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the red "Make America Great Again" baseball caps that many of his supporters wear. "But if she ever got elected, she'd change it."

Swift gets off the sideline

One of the most consequential moments came in a post on one of the most followed accounts on Instagram moments after the debate ended.

Swift has a loyal following among young women, a demographic Harris needs to turn out in big numbers. She called Harris a "gifted leader," telling her fans to do their research and make their own decisions, but "I've done my research, and I've made my choice."

Trump on race and Harris on the attack

ABC moderator David Muir asked Trump point-blank about his allegation last month that Harris had be-latedly "turned Black." Harris is Black and South Asian and a graduate of Howard University, a historically Black school in Washington.

Trump tried to play down the matter. "I don't care what she is, you make a big deal out of something, I couldn't care less," Trump said.

Harris, however, had her opening and she rattled off a long list of Trump's racial controversies: his legal settlement for discrimination against prospective Black tenants at his New York apartment buildings in the 1970s; his ad calling for the execution of Black and Latino teenagers — who were wrongly arrested — in the Central Park jogger case in the 1980s; and his false claims that former President Barack Obama was not born in the United States.

"I think the American people want something better than that, want better than this," Harris said.

Trump accused Harris of trying to "divide" people and dismissed her claims as dated and irrelevant.

"This is a person that has to stretch back 40, 50 years ago because there's nothing now," he said.

Harris and Trump dug in on abortion positions

Harris came out swinging in defense of abortion rights, perhaps the strongest issue for Democrats since Trump's nominees created a Supreme Court majority to overturn the constitutional right to an abortion. Her sharp arguments provided a vivid contrast to President Joe Biden's rambling comments on the issue during his June debate with Trump.

"The government, and Donald Trump, certainly should not be telling a woman what to do with her body," Harris said. She painted a vivid picture of women facing medical complications, gut-wrenching decisions and the need to travel out of state for an abortion.

Trump was just as fierce in defense, saying he returned the issue to the states, an outcome he said many Americans wanted. He struggled with accuracy, however, repeating the false claim that Democrats support abortion even after babies are born. He stuck to that even after he was corrected by moderator Linsey Davis.

"I did a great service in doing that. It took courage to do it," Trump said of the overturning of Roe v. Wade and its constitutional protections for abortion. "And the Supreme Court had great courage in doing it. And I give tremendous credit to those six justices."

Polls has shown significant opposition to overturning Roe and voters have punished Republicans in recent elections for it.

Who's talking now?

Trump took a Harris talking point and directed it right back at her. It happened when he objected after Harris interrupted him.

"Wait a minute, I'm talking now," Trump said. "Sound familiar?"

He was putting his own spin on a line Harris used famously against Mike Pence in the 2020 vice presidential debate when she rebuked Pence for interrupting, saying, "Mr. Vice President, I'm speaking."

A message to the middle

In a divided nation, the election will ultimately be decided by a small slice of swing voters in only a handful of states. And in a nod toward that fact, Harris made an explicit appeal to voters across the political spectrum — including Republicans.

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She noted that she is a gun owner. She cited the "late, great John McCain," a reference to the Arizona Republican senator and war hero whom Trump criticized for being captured by enemy soldiers. And she listed the many Republicans who formerly served in the Trump administration who have now endorsed her campaign.

Trump, meanwhile, offered little outreach to voters in the middle, ignoring the calls for unity that framed his summertime convention speech.

Harris seized on the Jan. 6 attack on the Capitol to make another explicit appeal to undecided voters.

"It's time to turn the page," she said. "And if that was a bridge too far for you, well, there is a place in our campaign for you."

A restrained Trump — except when he wasn't

Democrats hoped and Republicans feared that Trump would lose his cool on stage. At first he didn't, but as Harris increasingly got under his skin, he went to some dark places.

Trump amplified false rumors that Haitian immigrants in Ohio are eating pets — ABC's Muir noted that local officials say that is not happening — as he argued that the Biden-Harris administration was admitting dangerous immigrants.

When Harris pressed him on the array of criminal and civil cases against him, Trump similarly fumed. He accused Harris and Biden of planting all the cases.

"I probably took a bullet to the head because of the things they said about me," Trump said, referencing the assassination attempt in July by a gunman whose motives are unknown.

When pressed on whether he had any responsibility for Capitol riot, Trump raised his voice, blaming both Democratic Rep. Nancy Pelosi of California, who was the House speaker at the time, and the Democratic mayor of Washington. He said the rioters have "been treated so badly" and once again denied he lost the 2020 election.

Harris replied, "Donald Trump was fired by 81 million people, let's be clear about that, and clearly he's having a very difficult time processing that."

An early skirmish on the economy

The debate opened with an unexpectedly wonky exchange on the economy: Harris took on Trump for his plan to put in place sweeping tariffs and for the trade deficit he ran as president; Trump slammed Harris for inflation that he incorrectly said was the worst in the country's history.

Trump said people look back on his presidency's economy fondly. "I created one of the greatest economies in the history of our country," he said. Harris flatly told viewers, "Donald Trump has no plan for you."

Americans are slightly more likely to trust Trump over Harris when it comes to handling the economy, according to an Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs poll from August.

Gender an afterthought

Harris would be the nation's first female president. But her gender was an afterthought during the debate. She made no references to the historic nature of her candidacy. Neither did Trump.

And there were no performative moments in which gender was an issue. Who could forget Trump's decision to stand behind his last female opponent, Hillary Clinton, during a 2016 debate? He also called Clinton a "nasty woman." Afterward, Clinton said she was creeped out.

But on Tuesday night, both candidates stayed behind their podiums as instructed and there were no explicit jabs regarding gender.

## As Trump and Harris spar, ABC's moderators grapple with conducting a debate in a polarized country

By DAVID BAUDER AP Media Writer

The ABC News moderators were great. No, actually they were a "disgraceful failure." They cut off Kamala Harris too much. No, actually they corrected Donald Trump unfairly.

Such is the contentious tenor of the times in 2024's campaign season. And so it went Tuesday night at Trump's and Harris' first — and quite possibly only — debate.



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In an illustration of how difficult it is to conduct a presidential debate in a polarized country, ABC News moderators David Muir and Linsey Davis fact-checked and corrected Trump four times Tuesday and were attacked angrily by the former president and his supporters.

Trump, shortly after he left the stage in Philadelphia, sent out a message on his social media platform: "I thought that was my best debate, EVER, especially since it was THREE ON ONE!"

Muir and Davis moderated what is expected to be the only debate between the former president and the sitting vice president. They asked about economic policy, the war in Ukraine, abortion, the Jan. 6 U.S. Capitol insurrection and changes in Harris' stances since her 2020 presidential run.

In the end, Trump logged 43 minutes and 3 seconds of time talking, while Harris had 37 minutes and 41 seconds, according to a count by The New York Times.

Opinions on the coverage were a political litmus test

The debate's stakes were high to begin with, not only because of the impending election itself but because the last presidential debate in June — between Trump and sitting President Joe Biden, whose performance was roundly panned — uncorked a series of events that ended several weeks later with Biden's withdrawal from the race and Harris stepping in.

Opinions on how ABC handled the latest debate Tuesday were, in a large sense, a Rorschach test on how supporters of both sides felt about how it went. MSNBC commentator Chris Hayes sent a message on X that the ABC moderators were doing an "excellent" job — only to be answered by conservative commentator Ben Shapiro, who said, "this is how you know they're complete s---."

While CNN chose not to correct any misstatements by the candidates during Trump's debate with Biden in June, ABC instead challenged statements that Trump made about abortion, immigration, the 2020 election and violent crime.

During a discussion of abortion, Trump made his oft-repeated claim that Democrats supported killing babies after they were born. Said Davis: "There is no state in the country where it is legal to kill a baby after it was born."

Muir pointed out that Trump, after years of publicly not admitting to his defeat to Biden in the 2020 election, had recently on three separate occasions conceded he had lost. Trump replied that he had been sarcastic in making those recent statements.

"I didn't detect the sarcasm," Muir said.

After suggesting that crime had gone up during the Biden administration, Muir pointed out that violent crime had gone down during that period, prompting an argument with the former president. ABC also noted, after Trump had repeated a debunked report that immigrants were killing and eating pets in Ohio, that there had been no evidence that had happened.

ABC moderators did not correct any statements made by Harris.

"Could they have done more? Yes," said Angie Drodnic Holan, director of the international fact-checking network at the Poynter Institute, said in an interview. "Did they do enough? I would say yes. The alternative was none."

Toward the end of the debate, CNN fact checker Daniel Dale said on social media that "Trump has been staggeringly dishonest and Harris has been overwhelmingly (though not entirely) factual."

Both candidates didn't answer some questions

As is often the case in debates, the moderators often saw specific questions go unanswered. Harris, for example, was asked to address Trump's criticism that the U.S. Justice Department has been weaponized against him. She did not. She also skirted questions about changes to some of her past positions on issues. Muir twice asked Trump whether he wanted Ukraine to win its war against Russia, and he didn't answer.

The split screen views of both candidates onscreen told different stories. Trump often looked angry or smiled at some of Harris' statements, while avoiding eye contact with his opponent. Harris looked over at her opponents several times, often in bemusement, sometimes in open amusement, sometimes shaking her head.

Online anger toward how ABC handled the evening began while the debate was ongoing, and quickly became a talking point.

"These moderators are a disgraceful failure, and this is one of the most biased, unfair debates I have ever seen," conservative commentator Megyn Kelly posted on X. "Shame on ABC."

Answering online critics who complained ABC stacked the deck in Harris' favor, Atlantic writer James Surowiecki wrote that "the way they 'rigged' the debate is by letting (Trump) hang himself with his own stream of consciousness rambles."

"It was like a 4Chan post come to life," CNN's Jake Tapper said.

On Fox News Channel, anchor Martha MacCallum said after the debate that Harris "was never really held to the fire." Commentator Brit Hume agreed with her, but said something else was at play.

"Make no mistake about it," Hume said. "Trump had a bad night."

## **To pumped-up Democrats, Harris was everything Biden was not in confronting Trump in debate**

By CALVIN WOODWARD Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — To many Democrats, Kamala Harris was everything Joe Biden was not in confronting Donald Trump on the debate stage: forceful, fleet of foot, relentless in going after her opponent.

In a pivot from Biden's debate meltdown in June, Democrats who gathered in bars, watch parties and other venues Tuesday night found lots to cheer in her drive to rattle the Republican.

In a race for the White House that surveys say is exceptionally close, with both sides looking for an edge, it was the Democrats who came away more exuberant after the nationally televised debate.

"She prosecuted Donald Trump tonight," said Alina Taylor, 51, a high school special education teacher who joined hundreds of people on a football field of the historically Black Salem Baptist Church of Abington in a suburb of Philadelphia, where people watched on a 33-foot (10 meter) screen.

As for Trump, she said, "I was appalled" by his performance. "People were laughing at him because he wasn't making very much sense."

In Seattle, people gathered at Massive, a queer nightclub where scores watched the debate on a projector set up in front of the club's large disco ball. The crowd laughed and cheered when Trump branded Harris a Marxist. More cheers when the debate moderator called out Trump's false claim that some states legalize the killing of babies after birth.

"He's getting smoked," one said.

But in Brentwood, Tennessee, Sarah Frances Morris heard nothing at her watch party to shake her support of Trump.

"I think he beat her on the border," she said. "I think he also beat her on actually having plans and letting the American people know what those are. And I think that Kamala Harris likes to mention that she has plans for things, but she doesn't actually ever elaborate on what those plans are."

Morris conceded she was watching history being made, "because we have our first Black woman running for president." But, she added, "I don't think she delivered to get her to that place she needed to be."

Harris supporter Dushant Puri, 19, a UC Berkeley student, said the vice president took command before the first words were spoken — when she crossed the stage to shake Trump's hand. "I thought that was pretty significant," Puri said. "It was their first interaction, and I thought Harris was asserting herself."

At the same watch party, fellow student Angel Aldaco, 21, said that unlike Biden, Harris "came in with a plan and was more concise."

Aldaco was struck by one of the night's oddest moments, when Trump "went on that rampage about eating pets." That's when Trump endorsed a baseless conspiracy theory that immigrants were stealing and eating people's dogs and cats. Harris was incredulous. "That was good," the student said.

It's questionable how much viewers learned about what Harris would do as president or whether she won over independents or wavering Republicans. But for some Democrats, despondent if not panicked after Biden's fumbling debate performance, it was enough to see a Democratic candidate getting seriously under Trump's skin.

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"He is pretty incapable when he is riled up," said Ikenna Amilo, an accountant at a Democratic watch party in a small concert venue in downtown Portland, Maine.

"When you poke him, he is really reactive and he doesn't show the temperament you want in a president, so I think Kamala has shown she's doing a good job."

Annetta Clark, 50, a Harris supporter from Vallejo, California, watched at a party hosted by the Oakland Bay Area chapter of the National Coalition of 100 Black Women. To her, the second presidential debate was a mighty relief from the one in June.

"I couldn't stomach the first one, if I'm being honest," Clark said. "I tried to watch it and it was a little too much. This one I was able to enjoy." On Trump's performance: "It was almost like talking to a child with him." Harris? "Fabulous job."

Democrat Natasha Salas, 63, of Highland, Indiana, saw the debate from an Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority watch party at a bistro in Markham, Illinois, and welcomed Harris' call to cool the political temperature — even as the vice president denounced Trump at every turn.

"We all want the same things, Democrats and Republicans," Salas said. "We are more alike than different. I want to see the country move forward and less divisiveness."

Interest in the debate transcended national borders. From a shelter for migrants in Tijuana, Mexico, where dozens watched a translated version of the debates on a television, Rakan al Muhana, 40, an asylum-seeker from Gaza, became animated when the candidates discussed Israel and Palestine.

"We are running from the war," he said. "We are running from the Israeli bombs. He (Trump) doesn't see us as human. My daughter, who is four months — for him, she's a terrorist."

Al Muhana has been on a four-month journey from Gaza to this border city, with his wife and four children. They left when both his mother and father were killed in a bombing.

## US commemorates 9/11 attacks with victims in focus, but politics in view

By JENNIFER PELTZ Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The U.S. is remembering the lives taken and those reshaped by 9/11, marking an anniversary laced this year with presidential campaign politics.

Sept. 11 — the date when hijacked plane attacks killed nearly 3,000 people in 2001 — falls in the thick of the presidential election season every four years, and it comes at an especially pointed moment this time.

Fresh off their first-ever debate Tuesday night, Vice President Kamala Harris and former President Donald Trump are both expected to attend 9/11 observances at the World Trade Center in New York and the Flight 93 National Memorial in Pennsylvania.

Then-senators and presidential campaign rivals John McCain and Barack Obama made a visible effort to put politics aside on the 2008 anniversary. They visited ground zero together to pay their respects and lay flowers in a reflecting pool at what was then still a pit.

It's not yet clear whether Harris and Trump even will cross paths. If they do, it would be an extraordinary encounter at a somber ceremony hours after they faced off on the debate stage.

Regardless of the campaign calendar, organizers of anniversary ceremonies have long taken pains to try to keep the focus on victims. For years, politicians have been only observers at ground zero observances, with the microphone going instead to relatives who read victims' names aloud.

"You're around the people that are feeling the grief, feeling proud or sad — what it's all about that day, and what these loved ones meant to you. It's not political," said Melissa Tarasiewicz, who lost her father, New York City firefighter Allan Tarasiewicz.

President Joe Biden, on the last Sept. 11 of his term and likely his half-century political career, is headed with Harris to the ceremonies in New York, in Pennsylvania and at the Pentagon, the three sites where commercial jets crashed after al-Qaida operatives took them over on Sept. 11, 2001.

Officials later concluded that the aircraft that crashed near rural Shanksville, Pennsylvania, was headed toward Washington. It went down after crew members and passengers tried to wrest control from the



hijackers.

The attacks killed 2,977 people and left thousands of bereaved relatives and scarred survivors. The planes carved a gash in the Pentagon, the U.S. military headquarters, and brought down the trade center's twin towers, which were among the world's tallest buildings.

The catastrophe also altered U.S. foreign policy, domestic security practices and the mindset of many Americans who had not previously felt vulnerable to attacks by foreign extremists.

Effects rippled around the world and through generations as the U.S. responded by leading a "Global War on Terrorism," which included invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. Those operations killed hundreds of thousands of Afghans and Iraqis and thousands of American troops, and Afghanistan became the site of the United States' longest war.

As the complex legacy of 9/11 continues to evolve, communities around the country have developed remembrance traditions that range from laying wreaths to displaying flags, from marches to police radio messages. Volunteer projects also mark the anniversary, which Congress has titled both Patriot Day and a National Day of Service and Remembrance.

At ground zero, presidents and other officeholders read poems, parts of the Declaration of Independence and other texts during the first several anniversaries.

But that ended after the National Sept. 11 Memorial and Museum decided in 2012 to limit the ceremony to relatives reading victims' names. Then-Mayor Michael Bloomberg was board chairman at the time and still is.

Politicians and candidates still have been able to attend the event. Many do, especially New Yorkers who held office during the attacks, such as former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, who was then a U.S. senator.

She and Trump overlapped at the ground zero 9/11 remembrance in 2016, and it became a fraught chapter in the narrative of that year's presidential campaign.

Clinton, then the Democratic nominee, abruptly left the ceremony, stumbled while awaiting her motorcade and later disclosed that she had been diagnosed with pneumonia a couple of days earlier. The episode stirred fresh attention to her health, which Trump had been questioning for months.

To be sure, victims' family members occasionally send their own political messages at the ceremony, where readers generally make brief remarks after finishing their assigned set of names.

Some relatives have used the forum to bemoan Americans' divisions, exhort leaders to prioritize national security, acknowledge the casualties of the war on terror, complain that officials are politicizing 9/11 and even criticize individual officeholders.

But most readers stick to tributes and personal reflections. Increasingly they come from children and young adults who were born after the attacks killed a parent, grandparent, aunt or uncle.

"Even though I never got to meet you, I feel like I've known you forever," Annabella Sanchez said last year of her grandfather, Edward Joseph Papa. "We will always remember and honor you, every day.

"We love you, Grandpa Eddie."

## **Trump insists Russia's war should end. But he won't say if he wants Ukraine to win**

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Former President Donald Trump spoke heatedly in Tuesday's presidential debate about wanting Russia's war in Ukraine to be over — but twice refused to directly answer a question about whether he wanted U.S. ally Ukraine to win.

Trump also falsely claimed that the war had killed "millions" since Russia invaded Ukraine 2 1/2 years ago, while the U.N. says 11,700 civilian deaths have been verified. And he claimed without evidence that Vice President Kamala Harris, his Democratic opponent, had bungled a diplomatic mission just days before Russia launched the invasion.

Trump's comments are likely to heighten concern among Ukraine and its supporters that his return to

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the White House could push Ukraine into a losing peace deal with its stronger neighbor, Russia. Western-allied Ukraine depends on U.S. military and financial aid to keep up its fight against Russian forces, and it would have grave difficulty withstanding their attacks if the U.S. were to pull that support.

It's "a very simple question. Do you want Ukraine to win this war?" moderator David Muir of ABC News asked Trump in Tuesday's debate, the first of two times he pressed Trump for a direct answer.

"I want the war to stop," Trump responded. "I want to save lives," he added, going on to claim falsely that "millions" were dying in the conflict.

Muir then asked him again, questioning whether Trump believed "it's in the U.S. best interest for Ukraine to win this war."

The Republican former president responded, "I think it's the U.S. best interest to get this war finished and just get it done."

Trump has said repeatedly he would have a peace deal done between Ukraine and Russia within a day if he is elected, although he doesn't say how. The fear of Ukraine's supporters is that the kind of deal Trump is talking about would amount to the country's democratic government capitulating significant territory and sovereignty to Russia's harsh demands.

Russian President Vladimir Putin earlier this year insisted Ukraine must give up vast amounts of territory and avoid joining NATO simply as a condition to start negotiations.

"The reason that Donald Trump says that this war would be over within 24 hours is because he would just give it up," Harris said Tuesday. She accused Trump of being in "what you think is a friendship with ... a dictator who would eat you for lunch."

Trump has a long history of admiring comments about Putin, including calling his tactics in the 2022 invasion of Ukraine "genius" and "very savvy." Trump expresses no such warmth for Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, calling him a "salesman" for his appeals to allies for weapons.

The Biden administration says a victory in Ukraine would embolden Putin to move against other Western-allied democracies in Europe. President Joe Biden and his top officials were key players in rallying international support for Ukraine and sanctions against Russia since even before Russian forces rolled into Ukraine. The U.S. spurred allies into action by pointing to declassified intelligence showing Russian preparations for the invasion.

Just days before the invasion in late February 2022, Biden sent Harris to the annual Munich Security Conference in Germany, a high-profile mission to consolidate support for Ukraine among European and NATO leaders. Harris met on the sidelines with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

Trump during the debate linked the timing of Harris' trip to Europe to Putin's sending troops into Ukraine days later.

"They sent her in to negotiate with Zelenskyy and Putin. And she did. And the war started three days later," he said.

However, the U.S. government said the Russian troops massing on Ukraine's border and intelligence assessments already pointed to an imminent invasion. And Putin was not at the security conference in Germany, and Harris didn't meet with him.

## **Kamala Harris gives abortion rights advocates the debate answer they've longed for in Philadelphia**

By AMANDA SEITZ and LAURA UNGAR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — When President Joe Biden gave bumbling remarks about abortion on the debate stage this summer, it was widely viewed as a missed opportunity — a failure, even — on a powerful and motivating issue for Democrats at the ballot box.

The difference was stark, then, on Tuesday night, when Vice President Kamala Harris gave a forceful defense of abortion rights during her presidential debate with Republican Donald Trump.

Harris conveyed the dire medical situations women have found themselves in since the U.S. Supreme Court overturned the national right to abortion in 2022. Harris quickly placed blame directly on Trump,

who recalibrated the Supreme Court to the conservative majority that issued the landmark ruling during his term.

Women, Harris told the national audience, have been denied care as a result.

"You want to talk about this is what people wanted? Pregnant women who want to carry a pregnancy to term, suffering from a miscarriage, being denied care in an emergency room because health care providers are afraid they might go to jail and she's bleeding out in a car in the parking lot?" Harris said.

The moment was a reminder that Harris is uniquely positioned to talk about the hot-button, national topic in a way that Biden, an 81-year-old Catholic who had long opposed abortion, never felt comfortable doing.

Harris has been the White House's public face for efforts to improve maternal health and ensure some abortion access, despite the Supreme Court ruling. Earlier this year, she became the highest-ranking U.S. official to make a public visit to an abortion clinic.

Dr. Daniel Grossman, a University of California, San Francisco OB-GYN, said he was glad to see Harris highlight the challenges people face in states with abortion bans. "People who have been unable to get abortion care where they live, who have to travel, people who have suffered obstetric complications and are unable to get the care they need because of the abortion bans," Grossman said.

Harris still hedged, however, on providing details about what type of restrictions – if any – she supports around abortion. Instead, she pivoted: saying that she wants to "reinstate the protections of Roe," which prohibited states from banning abortions before fetal viability, generally considered around 20 weeks.

Trump, meanwhile, danced around questions about his intentions to further restrict abortion. He would not say whether he would sign a national abortion ban as president.

Anti-abortion advocates say they don't believe Trump would sign a ban if it landed on his desk.

Carol Tobias, president of the National Right to Life Committee, said her group hasn't been focusing on a national ban "because it's not going to happen. The votes aren't there in Congress. You know, President Trump said he wouldn't sign it. We know Kamala Harris won't."

Trump also falsely claimed that some Democrats want to "execute the baby" after birth in the ninth month of pregnancy.

## **FACT FOCUS: A look at false and misleading claims made during Trump and Harris' debate**

The Associated Press undefined

In their first and perhaps only debate, former President Donald Trump and Vice President Kamala Harris described the state of the country in distinctly different ways. As the two traded jabs, some old false and misleading claims emerged along with some new ones.

Here's a look.

Trump inflates numbers around new military equipment left in Afghanistan

TRUMP, on the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan: "We wouldn't have left \$85 billion worth of brand new, beautiful military equipment behind."

THE FACTS: That number is significantly inflated, according to reports from the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, or SIGAR, which oversees American taxpayer money spent on the conflict.

The \$85 billion figure resembles a number from a July 30 quarterly report from SIGAR, which outlined that the U.S. has invested about \$83 billion to build, train and equip Afghan security forces since 2001. That funding included troop pay, training, operations and infrastructure along with equipment and transportation over two decades, according to SIGAR reports and Dan Grazier, a defense policy analyst at the Project on Government Oversight.

Only about \$18 billion of that sum went toward equipping Afghan forces between 2002 and 2018, a June 2019 SIGAR report showed.

No one knows the exact value of the U.S.-supplied Afghan equipment the Taliban have secured, defense officials have confirmed it is significant.

Trump overstates his economic record



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TRUMP: "I created one of the greatest economies in the history of our country. ... They've destroyed the economy."

THE FACTS: This is an exaggeration. The economy grew much faster under Presidents Bill Clinton and Ronald Reagan than it did under Trump. The broadest measure of economic growth, gross domestic product, rose 4% a year for four straight years under Clinton. The fastest growth under Trump was 3% in 2018. The economy shrank 2.2% in 2020, at the end of Trump's presidency. And a higher proportion of American adults had jobs under Clinton than under Trump. During the Biden-Harris administration, the economy expanded 5.8% in 2021, though much of that reflected a bounce-back from COVID.

Trump's record on manufacturing jobs examined

HARRIS: "We have created over 800,000 manufacturing jobs. ... Donald Trump said he was going to create manufacturing jobs. He lost manufacturing jobs."

THE FACTS: Those statements are missing context.

There were 12,188,000 manufacturing employees in the U.S. when Biden took office in January 2021, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Preliminary numbers for August 2024 put that number at 12,927,000. That's a difference of 739,000 — close to the 800,000 number Harris has cited.

Also of note is the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The number of manufacturing employees dropped steeply in April 2020, by more than 1.3 million. Discounting that decline, there were only 206,000 more manufacturing employees in August than there were in March 2020, prior to the pandemic.

Inflation has gone down

TRUMP: "They had the highest inflation perhaps in the history of our country, because I've never seen a worse period of time."

THE FACTS: While praising the strength of the economy under his presidency, Donald Trump misstated the inflation rate under Biden. 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%. Other historical periods have seen higher inflation, which hit more than 14% in 1980, according to the Federal Reserve.

Trump has distanced himself from Project 2025

HARRIS: "What you're going to hear tonight is a detailed and dangerous plan called Project 2025 that the former president intends on implementing if he were elected again."

THE FACTS: Trump has said he doesn't know about Project 2025, a controversial blueprint for another Republican presidential administration.

The plan was written up by many of his former aides and allies, but Trump has never said he'll implement the roughly 900-page guide if he's elected again. He has said it's not related to his campaign.

Trump on abortions 'after birth'

TRUMP: "Her vice presidential pick says abortion in the ninth month is absolutely fine. He also says execution after birth, it's execution, no longer abortion, because the baby is born, is okay."

THE FACTS: Walz has said no such thing. Infanticide is criminalized in every state, and no state has passed a law that allows killing a baby after birth.

Abortion rights advocates say terms like "late-term abortions" attempt to stigmatize abortions later in pregnancy. Abortions later in pregnancy are exceedingly rare. In 2020, less than 1% of abortions in the United States were performed at or after 21 weeks, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Trump's taxing and spending plan examined

HARRIS: "What the Wharton School has said is Donald Trump's plan would actually explode the deficit."

THE TRUTH: The Penn-Wharton Budget Model did find that Trump's tax and spending plans would significantly expand the deficit by \$5.8 trillion over ten years. But it also found that Harris' plans would increase the deficit by \$1.2 trillion over the same period.

Harris' record on fracking examined

TRUMP: "If she won the election, fracking in Pennsylvania will end on Day 1."

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THE FACTS: Trump's statement ignores the fact that without a law approved by Congress, a president can only ban fracking on federal lands.

The federal government owns about 2% of Pennsylvania's total land, and it is not clear how much of that is suitable for oil or gas drilling.

Republicans have criticized Harris for "flip-flopping" on the issue, noting that Harris said in the 2020 campaign that she opposed fracking, a drilling technique that is widely used in Pennsylvania and other states.

Harris has since said repeatedly that she won't ban fracking if elected, and she reiterated that in Tuesday's debate.

Trump shares inflated numbers around migrants and crime

TRUMP: "When you look at these millions and millions of people that are pouring into our country monthly — whereas, I believe, 21 million people, not the 15 people say, and I think it's a lot higher than the 21 — that's bigger than New York State ... and just look at what they're doing to our country. They're criminals, many of these people are criminals, and that's bad for our economy too."

FACTS: Trump's figures are wildly inflated. The Border Patrol made 56,408 arrests of people crossing the border illegally from Mexico in July, the latest monthly figure available. Since Biden took office, the Border Patrol made about 7.1 million border arrests, though the number of people is considerably lower because many of those arrests were repeat crossers.

The Biden administration also permitted legal entry for about 765,000 people on an online app called CBP One at land crossings in Mexico through July. It allowed another 520,000 from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua and Venezuela to come by air with financial sponsors. Additionally, an unknown number of people crossed the border illegally and eluded capture.

That doesn't come close to "millions and millions of people" monthly. .... It is also unproven that "many of these people are criminals."

There have been high-profile, heinous crimes committed by immigrants. But FBI statistics do not separate out crimes by the immigration status of the assailant, nor is there any evidence of a spike in crime perpetrated by migrants. In 1931, the Wickersham Commission did not find any evidence supporting a connection between immigration and increased crime, and many studies since then have reached similar conclusions.

Trump repeats false claims that noncitizens are being sought to vote

TRUMP: "A lot of these illegal immigrants coming in, they're trying to get them to vote. They can't even speak English. They don't even know what country they're in practically and these people are trying to get them to vote, and that's why they're allowing them to come into our country."

THE FACTS: In recent months, Trump and other Republicans have been repeating the baseless claim that Democrats want migrants to come into the country illegally so they will vote.

There's no evidence for this, nor is there any evidence that noncitizens illegally vote in significant numbers in this country.

Voting by people who are not U.S. citizens already is illegal in federal elections. It can be punishable by fines, prison time and even deportation. While noncitizens have cast ballots, studies show it's incredibly rare, and states regularly audit their voter lists to remove ineligible voters from the rolls.

Trump's comments suggest that not speaking English is somehow prohibitive for voting in the U.S. — and that's also not the case. In fact, the Voting Rights Act requires certain states to provide election materials in other languages depending on the voting-age population's needs.

Trump misrepresents crime statistics

TRUMP, criticizing the Biden administration: "Crime is through the roof."

THE FACTS: In fact, FBI data has shown a downward trend in violent crime since a coronavirus pandemic spike. Violent crime surged during the pandemic, with homicides increasing nearly 30% between in 2020 over the previous year — the largest one-year jump since the FBI began keeping records

Violent crime was down 6% in the last three months of 2023 compared with the same period the year before, according to FBI data released in March. Murders were down 13%. New FBI statistics released in June show the overall violent crime rate declined 15% in the first three months of 2024 compared to the

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same period last year. One expert has cautioned, however, that those 2024 figures are preliminary and may overstate the actual reduction in crime.

Trump endorses false rumor about immigrants eating pets

TRUMP: "In Springfield, they're eating the dogs, the people that came in, they're eating the cats... They're eating the pets of the people that live there."

THE FACTS: There's no evidence to support the claim, which Trump and his campaign have used to argue immigrants are committing crimes at a higher rate than others.

Authorities in Ohio have said there are no credible or detailed reports to support Trump's claim.

Jobs created under the Biden administration

"TRUMP: "Just like their number of 818,000 jobs that they said they created turned out to be a fraud."

THE FACTS: This is a mischaracterization of the government's process of counting jobs. Every year the Labor Department issues a revision of the number of jobs added in a 12-month period from April through March in the previous year. The adjustment is made because the government's initial job counts are based on surveys of businesses. The revision is then based on actual job counts from unemployment insurance files that are compiled later. The revision is compiled by career government employees with little involvement by politically appointed officials.

National Guard soldiers on Jan. 6

TRUMP, speaking about the Jan. 6 insurrection: "I said I'd like to give you 10,000 National Guard or soldiers. They rejected me. Nancy Pelosi rejected me."

THE FACTS: That's false. Pelosi does not direct the National Guard.

Further, as the Capitol came under attack, she and then-Senate Majority leader Mitch McConnell called for military assistance, including from the National Guard.

The Capitol Police Board makes the decision on whether to call National Guard troops to the Capitol. It is made up of the House Sergeant at Arms, the Senate Sergeant at Arms and the Architect of the Capitol.

The board decided not to call the guard ahead of the insurrection but did eventually request assistance after the rioting had already begun, and the troops arrived several hours later.

There is no evidence that either Pelosi or McConnell directed the security officials not to call the guard beforehand.

Trump falsely claims China is building 'massive' auto plants in Mexico

TRUMP: "They're building big auto plants in Mexico, in many cases owned by China."

THE FACTS: It's not the first time Trump has claimed the Biden administration is allowing Chinese auto-makers to build factories just across the border in Mexico.

At present, though, industry experts say they know of no such plants under construction, and there's only one small Chinese auto assembly factory operating in Mexico. It's run by a company called JAC that builds inexpensive vehicles from kits for sale in that country.

Trump falsely claims evidence shows he won in 2020

TRUMP: "There's so much proof. All you have to do is look at it."

THE FACTS: The election was not stolen. The authorities who have reviewed the election — including Trump's own attorney general — have concluded the election was fair.

Biden's victory over Trump in 2020 was not particularly close. He won the Electoral College with 306 votes to Trump's 232, and the popular vote by more than 7 million ballots. Recounts in key states affirmed Biden's victory, and lawsuits challenging the results were unsuccessful.

Trump claims Putin endorsed Harris

TRUMP: "Putin endorsed her last week, said 'I hope she wins.'"

THE FACTS: Russian President Vladimir Putin did wryly claim last week that Harris was his preferred candidate, but intelligence officials have dismissed the comment as not serious.

U.S. intelligence agencies have said Russia favors Trump, who has openly praised Putin, suggested cutting funds to Ukraine and repeatedly criticized the NATO military alliance.

Harris takes Trump's 'bloodbath' comment out of context



HARRIS: "Donald Trump, the candidate, has said in this election there will be a bloodbath if this and the outcome of this election is not to his liking. Let's turn the page on that."

THE FACTS: Trump delivered the line at a speech in March in Ohio in which he was talking about the impact of offshoring on the American auto industry and his plans to increase tariffs on foreign-made cars. It was in reference to the auto industry that he warned of a "bloodbath" if his proposals aren't enacted.

"If I don't get elected, it's going to be a bloodbath for the whole — that's going to be the least of it. It's going to be a bloodbath for the country," Trump said.

Trump misrepresents key facts of the Central Park Five case

TRUMP: "They admitted, they said they pled guilty and I said, 'well, if they pled guilty they badly hurt a person, killed a person ultimately ... And they pled guilty, then they pled not guilty.'"

THE FACTS: Trump misstated key details of the case while defending a newspaper ad he placed about two weeks after the April 1989 attack in which he called for bringing back the death penalty. Trump wrongly stated that the victim was killed and that the wrongly accused suspects had pleaded guilty.

Trump appeared to be confusing guilty pleas with confessions that the men — teenagers at the time — said they made to police under duress. They later recanted, pleaded not guilty in court and were convicted after jury trials. Their convictions were vacated in 2002 after another person confessed to the crime.

The victim, Trisha Meili, was in a coma for 12 days after the attack but ultimately survived. She testified in court against the wrongly accused suspects, who are now known as the Exonerated Five. In 2002, Matias Reyes confessed to the crime and said he was the lone assailant. DNA testing matched Reyes to the attack, but because of the statute of limitations he could not be charged in connection with it.

## Opening statements are set in the trial of 3 ex-Memphis officers charged in Tyre Nichols' death

By ADRIAN SAINZ Associated Press

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP) — Opening statements were expected Wednesday in the federal trial of three former Memphis police officers charged with federal civil rights violations in the January 2023 beating death of Tyre Nichols.

Prosecutors and defense lawyers are slated to address a jury for the first time in the death of Nichols, which was caught on police cameras and intensified calls for police reform in the U.S. The trial is expected to last three to four weeks.

Prosecutors and defense lawyers agreed on the 12 jurors and four alternates on Tuesday. A pool of 200 candidates answered questionnaires ahead of jury selection. Prospective jurors answered questions from U.S. District Judge Mark Norris about whether they could be fair and impartial in the face of heavy media coverage before the trial and whether watching video of the beating would be a problem for them if they are chosen.

Tadarrius Bean, Demetrius Haley and Justin Smith have pleaded not guilty to charges that they deprived the 29-year-old Nichols of his rights through excessive force and failure to intervene, and obstructed justice through witness tampering. Two others, Emmitt Martin III and Desmond Mills Jr., have already pleaded guilty to the federal charges and could testify against their former colleagues.

Nichols, who was Black, died in a hospital on Jan. 10, 2023, three days after he was kicked, punched and hit with a police baton following a traffic stop. Police video released that month showed the five officers, who also are Black, beating Nichols as he yelled for his mother about a block from his home. Video also showed the officers milling about and talking with each other as Nichols sat on the ground, struggling with his injuries.

The officers said Nichols was pulled over for reckless driving, but Memphis' police chief has said there is no evidence to substantiate that claim.

An autopsy report showed Nichols died from blows to the head and that the manner of death was homicide. The report described brain injuries and cuts and bruises to the head and other areas.

Nichols worked for FedEx, and he enjoyed skateboarding and photography.

The three officers now facing trial, along with Martin and Mills, were fired for violating Memphis Police Department policies. They had been members of a crime suppression team called the Scorpion Unit, which was disbanded after Nichols' death.

Shortly after their dismissal, the five were charged with second-degree murder in state court, where they pleaded not guilty. They were then indicted by a federal grand jury in September 2023.

Mills and Martin are expected to plead guilty to the state charges as well. A trial date in state court has not been set.

On Monday, the judge read a list of potential witnesses that includes Martin and Mills, in addition to two other former officers. Preston Hemphill fired his stun gun at the traffic stop scene but didn't follow Nichols to where other officers pummeled him. Hemphill was fired. Dewayne Smith was the supervising lieutenant who arrived on scene after the beating. He retired instead of being fired.

Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee on Tuesday told reporters that Nichols' death "never should have happened," but that "steps have been made to improve on the circumstances in the city of Memphis and in the Memphis Police Department."

"That family will always be forever changed because of that loss," the Republican said when asked directly about the trial. "And we talk a lot about redemption. And what we have to hope is that the redemption that comes with justice will be executed here in this case."

Earlier this year, Lee and Republican lawmakers clashed with Nichols' mother and stepfather as the state repealed Memphis police reforms implemented after their son's death. One of the voided city ordinances had outlawed so-called pretextual traffic stops, such as for a broken taillight and other minor violations.

## Taylor Swift endorses Kamala Harris for president after debate ends

By CHRIS MEGERIAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Taylor Swift, one of the music industry's biggest stars, endorsed Kamala Harris for president shortly after the debate ended on Tuesday night.

"I think she is a steady-handed, gifted leader and I believe we can accomplish so much more in this country if we are led by calm and not chaos," Swift wrote in an Instagram post, which included a link to a voter registration website.

Swift has a dedicated following among young women, a key demographic in the November election, and her latest tour has generated more than \$1 billion in ticket sales. In a half hour, the post received more than 2.3 million likes.

She included a picture of herself holding her cat Benjamin Button, and she signed the message "Childless Cat Lady." The remark is a reference to three-year-old comments made by JD Vance, Donald Trump's running mate, about women without children not having an equal stake in the country's future.

A Harris senior campaign official said the endorsement was not coordinated with the campaign. Tim Walz, Harris' running mate, appeared to learn about the endorsement in the middle of a live interview on MSNBC. As Rachel Maddow read the text, Walz broke into a smile and patted his chest.

"That was eloquent. And it was clear," Walz said. "And that's the kind of courage we need in America to stand up."

Swift wrote that her endorsement was partially prompted by Trump's decision to post AI-generated pictures suggesting that she had endorsed him. One showed Swift dressed as Uncle Sam, and the text said "Taylor wants YOU to VOTE for DONALD TRUMP."

Trump's posts "brought me to the conclusion that I need to be very transparent about my actual plans for this election as a voter," Swift wrote. She added that "I've done my research, and I've made my choice."

The Trump campaign dismissed Swift's endorsement.

"This is further evidence that the Democrat Party has unfortunately become a party of the wealthy elites," said spokesperson Karoline Leavitt.

"There's many Swifties for Trump out there in America," she said, herself included.

Swift's endorsement was not exactly a surprise. In 2020, she supported President Joe Biden, and she cheered for Harris in her debate against then-Vice President Mike Pence. She also was openly critical of Trump, saying he had stoked "the fires of white supremacy and racism."

Swift is a popular figure nationwide, but especially among Democrats. An October 2023 Fox News poll found that 55% of voters overall, including 68% of Democrats, said they had a favorable view of Swift. Republicans were divided, with 43% having a favorable opinion and 45% an unfavorable one.

AP VoteCast suggests that a partisan divide on Swift was apparent as early as 2018. That's the year Swift made her first political endorsement, supporting Tennessee Democrat Phil Bredesen for Senate over Republican Marsha Blackburn.

VoteCast found that among Tennessee voters that year, 55% of Democrats and just 19% of Republicans said they had a favorable opinion of Swift. Blackburn won by a comfortable margin in the deep red state.

Swift is the leading nominee at Wednesday's MTV Video Music Awards. While it's unclear whether Swift will attend the show in New York, she could use any acceptance speeches to elaborate on her support of Harris.

The event was shifted a day later to accommodate Tuesday's debate, and MTV has a long history of encouraging voter participation.

## Trump repeats false claims over 2020 election loss, deflects responsibility for Jan. 6

By ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Former President Donald Trump persisted Tuesday in saying during a nationally televised presidential debate that he had won the 2020 election and continued to take no responsibility for any of the mayhem that unfolded at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, when his supporters stormed the building to block the peaceful transfer of power.

The comments underscored the Republican's refusal, even four years later, to accept the reality of his defeat and his unwillingness to admit the extent to which his falsehoods about his election loss emboldened the mob that rushed the Capitol, resulting in violent clashes with law enforcement. It also made clear that Trump's grievances about 2020 remain central to his campaign against his Democratic opponent, Vice President Kamala Harris, as he continues to profess allegiance to the rioters.

Asked twice if he regretted anything he did on Jan. 6, when he told his supporters to march to the Capitol and exhorted them to "fight like hell," Trump at first responded by complaining that the questioner had failed to note that he had encouraged the crowd to behave "peacefully and patriotically" and by noting that one of his backers, Ashli Babbitt, was fatally shot inside the building by a Capitol Police officer.

He also suggested that protesters who committed crimes during the 2020 racial justice protests were not prosecuted. But a 2021 Associated Press review of documents in more than 300 federal cases stemming from the protests sparked by George Floyd's death found that more than 120 defendants across U.S. pleaded guilty or were convicted at trial of federal crimes including rioting, arson and conspiracy.

When the question about his actions on Jan. 6 arose again, he replied: "I had nothing to do with that other than they asked me to make a speech. I showed up for a speech."

But he ignored other incendiary language he used throughout the speech, during which he urged the crowd to march to the Capitol, where Congress was meeting to certify President Joe Biden's victory. Trump told the crowd: "If you don't fight like hell, you're not going to have a country anymore." That's after his lawyer, Rudy Giuliani, declared: "Let's have trial by combat."

Trump didn't appeal for the rioters to leave the Capitol until more than three hours after the assault began. He then released a video telling the rioters it was time to "go home," but added: "We love you. You're very special people."

He also repeated an oft-stated false claim that then-House Speaker Nancy Pelosi "rejected" his offer to send "10,000 National Guard or soldiers" to the Capitol. Pelosi does not direct the National Guard. As the Capitol came under attack, she and then-Senate Majority leader Mitch McConnell called for military



assistance, including from the National Guard.

Harris, for her part, pledged to "turn the page" from Jan. 6, when she was in the Capitol as democracy came under attack.

"So for everyone watching, who remembers what January 6th was, I say, 'We don't have to go back. Let's not go back. We're not going back. It's time to turn the page.'"

Trump's false claims extended to his 2020 election loss. Dozens of courts, Republican state officials and his own attorney general have said there was no evidence that fraud tipped the race or that the election was stolen.

Though Trump had seemed to acknowledge in a recent podcast interview that he had indeed "lost by a whisker," he insisted Tuesday night that that was a sarcastic remark and resumed his boasts about the election.

"I'll show you Georgia, and I'll show you Wisconsin, and I'll show you Pennsylvania," he said in rattling off states where he claimed, falsely, that he had won. "We have so many facts and statistics."

## Trump falsely accuses immigrants in Ohio of abducting and eating pets

By MIKE CATALINI, JULIE CARR SMYTH and BRUCE SHIPKOWSKI Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — Former President Donald Trump on Tuesday amplified false rumors that Haitian immigrants in Ohio were abducting and eating pets, repeating during a televised debate the type of inflammatory and anti-immigrant rhetoric he has promoted throughout his campaigns.

There is no evidence that Haitian immigrants in an Ohio community are doing that, officials say. But during the debate with Vice President Kamala Harris, Trump specifically mentioned Springfield, Ohio, the town at the center of the claims, saying that immigrants were taking over the city.

"They're eating the dogs. They're eating the cats. They're eating the pets of the people that live there," he said.

Harris called Trump "extreme" and laughed after his comment. Debate moderators pointed out that city officials have said the claims are not true.

Trump's comments echoed claims made by his campaign, including his running mate, Ohio Sen. JD Vance, and other Republicans. The claims attracted attention this week when Vance posted on social media that his office has "received many inquiries" about Haitian migrants abducting pets. Vance acknowledged Tuesday it was possible "all of these rumors will turn out to be false."

Officials have said there have been no credible or detailed reports about the claims, even as Trump and his allies use them to amplify racist stereotypes about Black and brown immigrants.

While president, Trump questioned why the U.S. would accept people from "s---hole" countries such as Haiti and some in Africa. His 2024 campaign has focused heavily on illegal immigration, often referencing in his speeches crimes committed by migrants. He argues immigrants are responsible for driving up crime and drug abuse in the United States and taking resources from American citizens.

Here's a closer look at how the false claims have spread.

How did this get started?

On Sept. 6, a post surfaced on X that shared what looked like a screengrab of a social media post apparently out of Springfield. The retweeted post talked about the person's "neighbor's daughter's friend" seeing a cat hanging from a tree to be butchered and eaten, claiming without evidence that Haitians lived at the house. The accompanying photo showed a Black man carrying what appeared to be a Canada goose by its feet. That post continued to get shared on social media.

On Monday, Vance posted on X. "Reports now show that people have had their pets abducted and eaten by people who shouldn't be in this country. Where is our border czar?" he said. The next day, Vance posted again on X about Springfield, saying his office had received inquiries from residents who said "their neighbors' pets or local wildlife were abducted by Haitian migrants. It's possible, of course, that all of these rumors will turn out to be false."

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Other Republicans shared similar posts. Among them was Texas Sen. Ted Cruz, who posted a photo of kittens with a caption that said to vote for Trump "So Haitian immigrants don't eat us."

Hours before Trump's debate with Harris, he posted two related photos on his social media site. One Truth Social post was a photo of Trump surrounded by cats and geese. Another featured armed cats wearing MAGA hats.

What do officials in Ohio say?

The office of the Springfield city manager, Bryan Heck, issued a statement knocking down the rumors. "In response to recent rumors alleging criminal activity by the immigrant population in our city, we wish to clarify that there have been no credible reports or specific claims of pets being harmed, injured or abused by individuals within the immigrant community," Heck's office said in an emailed statement.

Springfield police on Monday told the Springfield News-Sun that they had received no reports of stolen or eaten pets.

Gov. Mike DeWine, R-Ohio, held a news conference Tuesday to address the influx of Haitian immigrants to Springfield. He said he will send state troopers to Springfield to help local law enforcement deal with traffic issues and is earmarking \$2.5 million over two years to provide more primary health care to immigrant families.

DeWine declined to address the allegations, deferring comment to local officials. But he repeatedly spoke in support of the people of Haiti, where his family has long operated a charity.

What do we know about a separate case 175 miles (281 km) away?

An entirely unrelated incident that occurred last month in Canton, Ohio, quickly and erroneously conflated into the discussion.

On Aug. 26, Canton police charged a 27-year-old woman with animal cruelty and disorderly conduct after she "did torture, kill, and eat a cat in a residential area in front (of) multiple people," according to a police report.

But Alexis Ferrell is not Haitian. She was born in Ohio and graduated from Canton's McKinley High School in 2015, according to public records and newspaper reports. Court records show she has been in and out of trouble with the law since at least 2017. Messages seeking comment were not returned by several attorneys who have represented her.

She is being held in Stark County jail pending a competency hearing next month, according to the prosecutor's office.

What do advocates for Haitian immigrants say?

The posts create a false narrative and could be dangerous for Haitians in the United States, according to Guerline Jozef, founder and executive director of the Haitian Bridge Alliance, a group that supports and advocates for immigrants of African descent.

"We are always at the receiving end of all kind of barbaric, inhumane narratives and treatments, specifically when it comes to immigration," Jozef said in a phone interview.

Her comments echoed White House national security spokesman John Kirby.

"There will be people that believe it, no matter how ludicrous and stupid it is," Kirby said. "And they might act on that kind of information, and act on it in a way where somebody could get hurt. So it needs to stop."

What is the broader context of Haitians in Ohio and the United States?

Springfield, a city of roughly 60,000, has seen its Haitian population grow in recent years. It's impossible to give an exact number, according to the city, but it estimates Springfield's entire county has an overall immigrant population of 15,000.

The city also says that the Haitian immigrants are in the country legally under a federal program that allows for them to remain in the country temporarily. Last month the Biden administration granted eligibility for temporary legal status to about 300,000 Haitians already in the United States because conditions in Haiti are considered unsafe for them to return. Haiti's government has extended a state of emergency to the entire country due to endemic gang violence.

Another matter cropping up and raised by Trump in an email Monday is the August 2023 death of an

11-year-old boy after a vehicle driven by an immigrant from Haiti hit the boy's school bus. After that, residents demanding answers about the immigrant community spoke out at city council meetings.

## Francine becomes a hurricane as Louisiana residents brace for expected Wednesday landfall

By SARA CLINE Associated Press

BATON ROUGE, La. (AP) — Francine became a hurricane Tuesday evening as it barreled toward south Louisiana, strengthening over extremely warm Gulf waters as those in possible harm's way rushed to complete storm preparations, filling sandbags, buying gas and stocking up on necessities for an expected landfall in the coming day.

Residents, especially in south Louisiana, have a 24-hour window to "batten down all the hatches," Louisiana Gov. Jeff Landry warned at midday while Francine was still a tropical storm.

The freshly minted Category 1 hurricane packed top sustained winds of 75 mph (120 kph) and forecasters warned it was expected to crash ashore Wednesday afternoon or evening in Louisiana with a potentially life-threatening storm surge and damaging winds — perhaps even as a Category 2 storm with winds of 96 to 110 mph (155 to 175 kph).

Ahead of the storm's approach, lifelong New Orleans resident Roxanne Riley, 42, gathered water, snacks and other food from a Walmart and said she planned to stay at a family member's house on high ground to avoid flooding. But she was ready to evacuate if things got worse.

"It's very frustrating every time a storm comes in," Riley said. "I'll just make sure my car is ready to roll in case I need to go by tomorrow. I'm going to keep on checking to see what it's looking like."

By 8 p.m. EDT Tuesday, Francine was centered about 350 miles (560 kilometers) southwest of Morgan City, Louisiana, and was moving northeast at 10 mph (17 kph), the Miami-based National Hurricane Center said in an advisory.

A hurricane warning was in effect along the Louisiana coast from Cameron eastward to Grand Isle, about 50 miles (80 kilometers) south of New Orleans, according to the center. A storm surge warning stretched from the Mississippi-Alabama border to the Alabama-Florida border. Such a warning means there's a chance of life-threatening flooding.

Once Francine makes landfall, Landry said, residents should stay in place rather than venturing out onto the roads and risk blocking first responders or utility crews working to repair power lines.

Helping Francine gain hurricane status Tuesday night were the Gulf's exceedingly warm late-summer waters. Water temperatures are about 87 degrees (31 degrees Celsius) where Francine is located, said Brian McNoldy, senior research associate at the University of Miami's Rosenstiel School of Marine, Atmospheric, and Earth Science.

"The ocean heat content averaged over the entire Gulf is the highest it's been on record for the date," McNoldy wrote on his blog.

In downtown New Orleans during the day, cars and trucks were lined up for blocks to collect sandbags from the parking lot of a local YMCA. CEO Erika Mann said Tuesday that 1,000 bags of sand had already been distributed by volunteers later Tuesday to people hoping to protect homes from possible flooding.

"I love that these are community people that came out," Mann said. "It's a beautiful effort to do what we do in New Orleans, we're resilient and we come together to help in the times we need each other."

One resident picking up sandbags was Wayne Grant, 33, who moved to New Orleans last year and was nervous for his first potential hurricane in the city. The low-lying rental apartment he shares with his partner had already flooded out in a storm the year before and he was not taking any chances this time around.

"It was like a kick in the face, we've been trying to stay up on the weather ever since," Grant said. "We're super invested in the place, even though it's not ours."

A little over three years after Hurricane Ida trashed his home in the Dulac community of coastal Louisiana's Terrebonne Parish — and about a month after he finished rebuilding — Coy Verdin was preparing



for another hurricane.

"We had to gut the whole house," he recalled in a telephone interview, rattling off a memorized inventory of the work, including a new roof and new windows.

Verdin, 55, strongly considered moving farther inland, away from the home where he makes his living on nearby Bayou Grand Caillou. After rebuilding, he said he's there to stay.

"As long as I can. It's getting rough, though," he said. He was preparing to head north to ride out Francine with his daughter in Thibodaux, about a 50-minute drive away. "I don't want to go too far so I can come back to check on my house."

Landry said the Louisiana National Guard is being deployed to parishes that could be impacted by Francine. They are equipped with food, water, nearly 400 high-water vehicles, about 100 boats and 50 helicopters to respond to the storm, including possible search-and-rescue operations.

Francine is the sixth named storm of the Atlantic hurricane season. There's a danger of life-threatening storm surge as well as damaging hurricane-force winds, said Brad Reinhart, a senior hurricane specialist at the hurricane center.

There's also the potential for 4 to 8 inches (10 to 20 centimeters) of rain with the possibility of 12 inches (30 centimeters) locally across much of Louisiana and Mississippi through Friday morning, Reinhart said. That heavy rainfall could also cause considerable flash and urban flooding.

The hurricane center said eastern Mississippi and especially coastal parts of Mississippi, Alabama and the Florida Panhandle were at risk of "considerable" flash and urban flooding starting Wednesday. It said flooding was also "probable" further inland into the lower Mississippi Valley and lower Tennessee Valley from Wednesday through Friday as a disbanding Francine churns inland.

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.

## Declassified memo from US codebreaker sheds light on Ethel Rosenberg's Cold War spy case

By ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A top U.S. government codebreaker who decrypted secret Soviet communications during the Cold War concluded that Ethel Rosenberg knew about her husband's activities but "did not engage in the work herself," according to a recently declassified memo that her sons say proves their mother was not a spy and should lead to her exoneration in the sensational 1950s atomic espionage case.

The previously unreported assessment written days after Rosenberg's arrest and shown to The Associated Press adds to the questions about the criminal case against Rosenberg, who along with her husband, Julius, was put to death in 1953 after being convicted of conspiring to steal secrets about the atomic bomb for the Soviet Union.

The couple maintained their innocence until the end, and their sons, Robert and Michael Meeropol, have worked for decades to establish that their mother was falsely implicated in spying. The brothers consider the memo a smoking gun and are urging President Joe Biden to issue a formal proclamation saying she was wrongly convicted and executed.

Historians have long regarded Julius Rosenberg as a Soviet spy. But questions about Ethel Rosenberg's role have simmered for years, dividing those who side with the Meeropols and say she had zero role in

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espionage from some historians who contend there's evidence she supported her husband's activities.

The handwritten memo from Meredith Gardner, a linguist and codebreaker for what later became known as the National Security Agency, cites decrypted Soviet communications in concluding that Ethel Rosenberg knew about Julius' espionage work "but that due to ill health she did not engage in the work herself."

Ethel Rosenberg went on trial with her husband months after the memo was written despite Gardner's assessment, which the Meeropols believe would have been available to FBI and Justice Department officials investigating and prosecuting the case.

"This puts it on both sides of the Atlantic — in other words, both the KGB and the NSA ended up agreeing that Ethel was not a spy," Robert Meeropol said in an interview. "And so we have a situation in which a mother of two young children was executed as a master atomic spy when she wasn't a spy at all."

The Meeropols recently obtained the Aug. 22, 1950, memo from the NSA through a Freedom of Information Act request and provided it to the AP.

"This piece of documentation, juxtaposing my father's work with her not doing the work, it seems to me nails it," Michael Meeropol said.

## Secretive findings

The document was written more than a week after Ethel Rosenberg's arrest — her husband was arrested a month earlier — presumably to summarize what was known about a Soviet spy ring operating in the U.S. at the height of the Cold War and associated with the development of the atomic bomb.

It refers to Julius Rosenberg, who worked as a civil engineer, by his Soviet code names — first "Antenna" and later "Liberal" — and characterizes him as a recruiting agent for Soviet intelligence.

In a separate paragraph titled, "Mrs. Julius Rosenberg," Gardner describes a decoded message as saying Ethel Rosenberg was a "party member" and "devoted wife" who knew of her husband's work but didn't engage in it.

Harvey Klehr, a now-retired Emory University historian, said this week that the memo notwithstanding, his position is that Ethel Rosenberg conspired to commit espionage even if she did not spy herself or have access to classified information.

"Ethel may not have been a spy — that is, she might not have actually passed on classified information — but she was an active participant in her husband's spy network, not just someone who happened to agree with her husband about politics," Klehr wrote in a 2021 piece for Mosaic Magazine.

Another historian, Mark Kramer of Harvard University, said this week that the interpretation of the Russian communication was debatable and that in any event other documents contain "damning evidence" of Ethel Rosenberg's involvement in spying, and her participation in tasks, even "if she was not directly participating in the way Julius Rosenberg was."

The Meeropols adamantly dispute that, insisting the evidence is clear that the Soviets never considered their mother an asset and that she had no role in recruiting spies or assisting her husband's espionage.

## A brother's account

The memo is the latest information that Ethel Rosenberg's supporters say casts doubt on her criminal conviction and the narrative of her as a spy. For instance, previously deciphered Soviet cables showed that she, unlike her husband, was not given a code name. The Meeropols also point to a separate memo from Gardner stating Ethel Rosenberg did "not work," a presumed reference to espionage.

In a 2001 television interview, Ethel Rosenberg's brother, David Greenglass, acknowledged that he lied on the stand about his sister to assure leniency for himself and keep his wife out of prison so she could care for their two children. A fellow communist sympathizer, he was indicted as a co-conspirator and served 10 years in prison.

In 2015, secret grand jury testimony from Greenglass was unsealed that contradicted damaging statements he made during the Rosenbergs' trial that helped secure their convictions.

Greenglass claimed at trial that he had given the Rosenbergs research data he obtained while working as an Army machinist at the Los Alamos, New Mexico, headquarters of the Manhattan Project, where the first atomic weapons were produced. He also said he recalled seeing his sister using a portable typewriter

at the Rosenbergs' apartment to type up handwritten notes to give to the Soviets.

But in his grand jury testimony, which a judge unsealed after Greenglass' 2014 death in response to a request from historians and archivists, he never implicated his sister.

Greenglass told the grand jury that Julius Rosenberg was adamant he should stick with his Army service so Greenglass could "continue giving him information." But when Greenglass was asked whether his sister was similarly insistent, he replied, "I said before, and say it again, honestly, this is a fact: I never spoke to my sister about this at all."

Sons feel relief

The Meeropols believe the newly released memo would almost certainly have reached high levels of the FBI given that Gardner, its author, worked closely with an FBI agent. They say the information may have influenced then-FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover's recommendation that Ethel Rosenberg not receive the death penalty, though she ultimately did.

Robert Meeropol, 77, said the memo's release is a capstone of decades of work to clear his mother's name. As young boys, the brothers visited the White House in 1953 in a failed bid to get President Dwight Eisenhower to prevent their parents' executions. They were later adopted.

In 2016, they cited the newly released grand jury testimony to try to persuade President Barack Obama to exonerate their mother.

"I'm incredibly relieved to have this out while I'm still alive, because for a lot of time, I didn't think I was going to survive to see it," he said.

Michael Meeropol, 81, said he recalled his brother saying in 1973 that in a few years they were going to "blow the lid off the case."

"Well, 1973 to 2024 is a little bit more than a few years, but it's just happened as far as I'm concerned. This memo being released, thank God, blows the lid off it in terms of our mother," Michael Meeropol said.

## **Dolphins coaches, players react to 'emotional' and 'triggering' footage of Tyreek Hill traffic stop**

By ALANIS THAMES AP Sports Writer

MIAMI GARDENS, Fla. (AP) — Tyreek Hill's teammates and coaches used words like "triggering" and a "shame" to describe body camera footage showing a police officer yanking the Miami Dolphins receiver out of his sports car and forcing him face-first onto the ground during a traffic stop.

The incident outside the Dolphins' stadium has drawn national attention. It has also led to conversations in the locker room among Hill's teammates, some of whom privately shared their own personal experiences with police, quarterback Tua Tagovailoa said.

"It was a little emotional for me, hearing Tyreek's voice in the footage," Tagovailoa said Tuesday.

The video released by the Miami-Dade Police Department on Monday evening showed that the traffic stop hours before Miami's season opener escalated quickly after Hill put up the window of his car.

Hill rolled down the driver's side window and handed his license to an officer who had been knocking on the window. Hill then told the officer repeatedly to stop knocking before rolling the darkly tinted window back up.

After a back and forth about the window, the body camera video shows an officer pull Hill out of his car by his arm and head and then force him face-first onto the ground. Officers handcuffed Hill and one put a knee in the middle of his back.

"It's a shame that had to happen that way," said Dolphins offensive coordinator Frank Smith. "When you spend all your time with these guys, you want to be there for them all the time to help. For me, like many guys, you wish you were there to help as well."

Hill said in a CNN interview that he was embarrassed and "shell-shocked" by what happened, and that he thought he followed the officers' directions.

The video shows that officers stood Hill up and walked him handcuffed to the sidewalk. One officer told him to sit on the curb. Hill told the officer he just had surgery on his knee. An officer then jumped behind



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him and put a bar hold around Hill's upper chest or neck and pulled Hill into a seated position.

Police Director Stephanie Daniels launched an internal affairs investigation the same day, and one officer was transferred to administrative duties.

The department on Tuesday identified the officer who was placed on administrative duties as Danny Torres, a 27-year veteran of the department. Ignacio Alvarez, Torres' attorney, issued a statement calling for his client's immediate reinstatement while respecting Daniels' call for an investigation.

The South Florida police union's president, Steadman Stahl, released a statement Monday saying Hill was not "immediately cooperative" with officers and that the officers followed policy in handcuffing Hill.

The altercation shown on six officers' body camera videos has brought to the forefront conversations surrounding the experience of Black people with police.

"It's been hard for me not to find myself more upset the more I think about it," said Dolphins coach Mike McDaniel, speaking Monday before the footage was released. "I think the thing that (messes) me up, honestly, to be quite frank, is knowing that I don't know exactly ... know what that feels like."

McDaniel, who is biracial, said his life experience has left him "aware" of conversations about race, while never having been in a similar situation to Hill's.

Safety Jevon Holland said what he saw in the footage did not surprise him.

"I'm 24," Holland said. "There's been a bunch of very unsettling and disturbing videos, body cam footage over and over again since Twitter has been a thing, really since Rodney King. I would like to be more shocked and surprised, but I'm not."

Holland also condemned those who used Hill's past allegations of violence to justify any excessive use of force.

"Doing something in the past, whether it be wrong or right, does not justify or condemn you to be treated in such a way when the situation has nothing to do with that at all," Holland said.

Many players were confused after seeing Hill's teammate, Calais Campbell, get handcuffed. Campbell, a widely respected defensive tackle who just began his 17th NFL season, stopped to help when he saw Hill in handcuffs, but ended up briefly handcuffed as well. 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.

"If I'm Calais Campbell and I'm 38 years old and you're going to work, whatever personal innocence that you have relative to — you're a gigantic, strong, just a miraculous man that has done right in all ways, shapes and forms. There's just elements to that that is very triggering," McDaniel said.

Dolphins defensive coordinator Anthony Weaver, who is Black, also referred to the video footage as triggering and reflected on his own life.

"It's unfortunate in this day and time," Weaver said, "when I have two boys — my wife is Mexican American — and both the times that they were born and they were light-skinned, there was almost a sense of relief in that they were going to avoid some of the same issues that I've had to deal with throughout my life."

Drew Rosenhaus, Hill's agent, appeared on the Dan Le Batard show Tuesday morning and called for at least one of the officers involved to be fired.

"For me personally, I think the police officers that did that to Tyreek shouldn't be in that position. They should be let go," Rosenhaus said, as footage of the encounter was shown. "Look at the guy that just kicked him right there. That guy should be fired. That's out of control."

Tagovailoa said Hill gathered some of his teammates together to turn the situation into something that could benefit the community.

With a pivotal game coming up Thursday against division rival Buffalo, the Dolphins will have to push past the week's distraction, while also not losing perspective, Tagovailoa said.

"We don't avoid the obvious. It's a thing. Let it be what it is. Let it take its course," Tagovailoa said. "I think when we start to brush that away and think that this football thing is the most important thing to us, when this isn't just something that Tyreek (has) gone through.

"This is something that people in general go through. That's a life thing. Football, we're blessed to do this. We're blessed to be able to play this sport. We're blessed to make all this money to do what we love and it's for fun. But that's really life. No games in that."

## Speaker Johnson pushes ahead on funding bill with proof of citizenship mandate despite dim prospects

By KEVIN FREKING Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Speaker Mike Johnson vowed Tuesday to press ahead with requiring proof of citizenship for new voters as part of a bill to avoid a partial government shutdown in three weeks, though the measure appeared likely to be voted down.

Democrats overwhelmingly oppose the measure. Enough Republicans were also coming out against the bill, though for different reasons, that its prospects of passing the House appeared dim. Even if it does pass the House on Wednesday, the bill would go nowhere in the Senate.

Johnson said the issue of election security is too critical to ignore, though research has shown that voting by non-citizens is extremely rare. It's also clear that Republicans see value in making House Democrats take another vote on the issue. The House approved a bill with the proof of citizenship mandate back in July

"If you have a few thousand illegals participate in the election in the wrong place, you can change the makeup of Congress and you can affect the presidential election," Johnson said. "The American people understand that."

The first test for the stopgap spending bill came Tuesday with a 209-206 vote that kept it moving ahead. But some Republicans who have said they will oppose the bill on final passage allowed it to proceed.

The measure includes a six-month extension of federal funding to keep agencies and programs operating through March 28.

But Democrats want a shorter-term extension so that the current Congress will set full-year spending levels for fiscal year 2025 rather than the next president and Congress. They also want the proof of citizenship mandate stripped out of the bill, saying it's unnecessary because states already have effective safeguards in place to verify voters' eligibility and maintain accurate voter rolls.

"Is it any surprise that the speaker's purely partisan CR seems to be running into trouble?" Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said, using Washington parlance for the short-term continuing resolution needed to prevent a shutdown. "The answer is very simple. The House should stop wasting time on a CR proposal that cannot become law."

Schumer called on Johnson to consult with Democratic leaders and the White House on a bipartisan package that can pass both chambers.

A few House Republicans have also come out against the bill. Some won't vote for any continuing resolution. They want Congress to return to passing the dozen annual appropriations bills individually. Others say the continuing resolution funds programs at levels they consider inappropriate at a time of nearly \$2 trillion annual deficits.

"I'm a firm no on bankrupting the nation and a yes on election integrity," said Rep. Cory Mills, R-Fla., in announcing his opposition.

Rep. Tim Burchett, R-Tenn., said Republican leadership was asking him to vote for what he called "a Nancy Pelosi-Schumer budget."

"I just think that's a bad idea," Burchett said.

Rep. Thomas Massie, R-Ky., said on X that the continuing resolution was "an insult to Americans' intelligence."

"The CR doesn't cut spending, and the shiny object attached to it will be dropped like a hot potato before passage," Massie said.

Republicans can afford to lose only four votes from their ranks if every Democrat votes against the bill.

Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump on Tuesday seemingly encouraged a government shutdown if Republicans in the House and Senate "don't get assurances on Election Security." He said on the social media platform Truth Social that they should not go forward with a continuing resolution without such assurances.

Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell disagreed when asked about Trump's post.

"Shutting down the government is always a bad idea, no matter what time of the year it is," McConnell said.

House Republicans met behind closed doors Tuesday morning to discuss the path forward. Rep. Jim Jordan, a co-founder of the conservative House Freedom Caucus, told colleagues "this is the best fight we've ever had," said Rep. Kevin Hern, R-Okla.

By holding another vote on the proof of citizenship requirement for voter registration, House Republicans are making Democrats in competitive swing districts take another vote on the issue ahead of the election. Last time, five Democrats sided with Republicans in support of the requirement. And their votes this time will be highly scrutinized.

Lawmakers said no plan B was discussed for government funding and that Johnson was determined to hold a vote regardless of the likely outcome.

"This is important to him," said Rep. Ralph Norman, R-S.C. "This is the hill to die on."

As lawmakers debated the short-term spending measure on the House floor, the focus was almost entirely on the proof of citizenship mandate, also referred to as the SAVE Act. Republicans linked a surge in migrants during the Biden administration with the prospect that some could vote in future elections.

"What are you afraid of to require someone to prove who they say that they are?" said Rep. Nick Langworthy, R-N.Y.

Democrats countered that the proof of citizenship requirement would disenfranchise many Americans who don't have the required documents readily available when they get an opportunity to register to vote.

"Let me be clear, the SAVE Act is not about targeting undocumented immigrants, it's about suppressing the vote of millions of American citizens," said Rep. Jim McGovern, D-Mass.

## **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 gov-



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ernment 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 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."

## Israel releases video of a Gaza tunnel where it says Hamas militants killed 6 hostages

By NATALIE MELZER and JOSEF FEDERMAN Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — The Israeli military on Tuesday released video footage of a Gaza tunnel where it says six hostages were recently killed by Hamas. The video shows a low, narrow passageway deep underground that had no bathroom and poor ventilation.

The discovery of the hostages' bodies last month has sparked a mass outpouring of anger in Israel and the release of the new video could add to the pressure on Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to reach a cease-fire deal with Hamas to bring the remaining hostages held by Hamas home.

Israeli military spokesman Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari said Tuesday the footage of the Gaza tunnel had been shown to the hostages' families, and that it "was very hard for them to see how their loved ones survived in those conditions."

Hagari revealed the video in a nationally televised press conference after visiting the tunnel himself. He said the tunnel was reached by a shaft buried under a child's bedroom in a home in the southern Gaza town of Rafah. The tunnel was about 20 meters (70 feet) underground and stretched about 120 meters (yards).

In the video, a hunched-over Hagari, unable to stand upright in the narrow arched passageway, describes the conditions as extremely humid and difficult to breathe. He showed bottles of urine, a bucket that appeared to have served as a makeshift toilet, a chess board and ammunition for an automatic rifle believed to have been used by the captors.

"They were here in this tunnel in horrific conditions, where there's no air to breathe, where you cannot stand," he said.

The six included Israeli-American Hersh Goldberg-Polin, 23, a native of Berkeley, California, whose parents led a high-profile global campaign seeking his release. Goldberg-Polin lost part of his left arm to a grenade in the Oct. 7 attack that sparked the war in Gaza. In April, Hamas issued a video that showed him alive, sparking protests in Israel. The army identified the others as Ori Danino, 25; Eden Yerushalmi, 24; Almog Sarusi, 27; Alexander Lobanov, 33; and Carmel Gat, 40.

Three of the six — including Goldberg-Polin — had reportedly been scheduled to be released in the first phase of a cease-fire proposal discussed in July, further fueling anger when they were found dead.

The Hostages Families Forum, a group representing relatives of hostages, said in a statement that "time is running out" and called for an immediate deal to return those kidnapped.

"Every day that passes is a danger to their lives, hanging by a thread, at the mercy of terrorists capable of the worst crimes against humanity," the group said.

Pathology tests on the bodies of the six, who were found by the military in the southern Gaza city of Rafah on Saturday, Aug. 31, showed they had been killed sometime on the night of Aug. 29, Hagari told reporters.

Hagari said Israeli soldiers found evidence indicating the hostages and at least two captors had been there for more than a few days. Mattresses, clothes, assault rifle magazines and shells were also found, as was some food, mainly energy bars and tuna. There were blood stains on the floor, he said.

The day before the bodies were found, Hagari said, the army had killed two militants trying to run away from a complex of tunnels near where the hostages were found. There was "a probability" that the two had been those who killed the hostages, he said. DNA tests were being carried out to verify this, he added.

Hamas kidnapped about 250 people during the Oct. 7 attack. More than 100 were released during a brief cease-fire in November in exchange for the release of Palestinians imprisoned by Israel. Eight have been rescued by Israeli forces, while Israeli troops mistakenly killed three Israeli hostages who had escaped captivity in December. Israeli authorities say 101 hostages remain in captivity, including 35 who are believed to be dead.

Shai Dickman, the cousin of Gat, one of the hostages who was found dead in the tunnel, told Israel's Channel 13 TV that the government should move immediately to reach a deal to bring home the remaining hostages.

"There are still people living like this," she said, holding back tears. "If there had been a deal on time, Carmel would be sitting here."

Hamas has offered to release the hostages in return for an end to the war, the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza and the release of a large number of Palestinian prisoners, including high-profile militants. But negotiations on a cease-fire have failed to produce any deal.

## **Dolphins star Tyreek Hill had an altercation with police. Here's what we know**

By TERRY SPENCER and ALANIS THAMES Associated Press

MIAMI GARDENS, Fla. (AP) — Miami Dolphins star wide receiver Tyreek Hill was pulled from his sports car by Miami-Dade County police officers outside Hard Rock Stadium during a traffic stop before the team's game on Sunday, triggering a national debate on whether the treatment was justified.

Hill, 30, was pushed onto the ground face-first, handcuffed and then was again forced to the ground despite his complaint that sitting on the curb caused pain in his surgically repaired knee.

Hill was eventually released after receiving citations for careless driving and failing to wear his seat belt — the total fine is \$309. His salary this season is almost \$20 million. Hours later, he caught an 80-yard touchdown pass that sparked the Dolphins' comeback win over the Jacksonville Jaguars.

Police Department Director Stephanie Daniels put Officer Danny Torres on administrative duty, and an internal affairs investigation is underway. The department released the identity of Torres, a 27-year veteran of the department, on Tuesday.

How did the altercation start?

**WHAT WE KNOW:** Officer body camera video released late Monday by the Miami-Dade Police Department shows that about three hours before kickoff Sunday, two motorcycle officers were parked on an access road south of the stadium when Hill sped past in his McLaren sports car. They immediately went in pursuit. They later said he was going 60 mph (97 kph).

Hill slowed and put down his window. An officer pulled alongside and told him to pull over. He did, but put his window back up.

The officer got off his motorcycle, walked to the car and tapped on Hill's window.

Hill lowered his window and told the officer, "Don't knock on my window like that" while handing the officer his driver's license.

The officer asked Hill why he didn't have his seat belt on. Hill again told the officer not to knock on his window.

"Why you have it up? I have to knock to let you know I am here," the officer replied.

"Give me my ticket, bro, so I can go. I am gonna be late. Do what you gotta do," Hill told the officer.

**WHAT WE DON'T KNOW:** The first officer's full name — the department did not release it and did not



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immediately respond to a request for it. He is listed on Hill's tickets as "M. Batista."

How did the traffic stop escalate?

WHAT WE KNOW: After demanding his ticket, Hill again put up his window.

"Keep it down," Batista snapped, rapping on the window with his knuckle. Hill can be seen through the tinted window buckling his seat belt.

Hill cracked his window and said, "Don't tell me what to do" before he again put the window up.

"Keep the window down or I am going to get you out of the car. As a matter of fact, get out of the car," the officer said.

Torres, who is standing to the side, then orders Hill to get out or "I am going to break that ... window," using an obscenity.

Torres then pulled the door open, grabbed Hill by the arm and the back of the neck and forced him face-first onto the ground as the player said, "I am getting out." Torres, the first officer and a third then pinned Hill, pulled his arms behind him and handcuffed him. One officer put his knee into Hill's back. It had been exactly one minute since the officer first tapped on Hill's window.

Hill yelled into his cellphone, "I am being arrested, Drew." He had placed a call to team security director Drew Brooks while still in the car.

Torres told Hill that he is going to obey their orders, again cursing at him. Hill told them, "take me to jail, do what you gotta do."

"We will," Torres replied.

Why didn't Hill keep his window down, and does Florida law require drivers to do so during a traffic stop?

WHAT WE KNOW: Hill told CNN's Kaitlan Collins on Monday night that he didn't keep the window down because he didn't want to create a scene as fans arrived.

"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."

But Florida's traffic code says it is a misdemeanor to disobey a police officer's "lawful order or direction." That also requires drivers and passengers to get out of a car during a traffic stop if ordered. Hill said he was getting out as fast as he could, but injuries that he is playing through slowed him down.

Seven seconds elapsed between the first officer ordering Hill out of the car and Torres pulling open the door.

Has Hill had any previous interactions with police?

WHAT WE KNOW: Hill was accused of punching his girlfriend in college and got kicked off the team at Oklahoma State University, 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.

Florida records do not show Hill receiving any prior traffic tickets in the state. He joined the Dolphins in March 2022.

What happened after Hill was handcuffed?

WHAT WE KNOW: The officers pulled Hill to his feet and took him to the sidewalk, where they ordered him to sit on the curb. He told officers he'd had knee surgery and he couldn't. Torres jumped behind him, put his arm around Hill's upper chest or neck and forced him to sit.

Hill's teammates Jonnu Smith and Calais Campbell stopped their vehicles after seeing Hill in handcuffs and tried to speak to officers, but they are told to leave. Officers briefly put Campbell in handcuffs after accusing him of not obeying their order to move back.

Police supervisors arrived and discussed the situation with the officers. The department deleted most of the audio from those conversations.

About 25 minutes after Hill was pulled over, he received his citations and was released.

What has the Miami-Dade Police Department and the officers' union said?

WHAT WE KNOW: Police Director Daniels put Torres on administrative duty and ordered the internal affairs investigation after reviewing the videos.

Steadman Stahl, president of the South Florida Police Benevolent Association, defended the officers'

actions, saying that Hill "was briefly detained for officer safety, after driving in a manner in which he was putting himself and others in great risk of danger."

"Upon being stopped, Mr. Hill was not immediately cooperative with the officers on the scene who, pursuant to policy and for their immediate safety, placed Mr. Hill in handcuffs. Mr. Hill, still uncooperative, refused to sit on the ground and was therefore redirected to the ground."

Ignacio Alvarez, Torres' attorney, issued a statement Tuesday calling for his client's immediate reinstatement while respecting Daniels' call for an investigation.

WHAT WE DON'T KNOW: It is unknown how long the internal affairs investigation will take.

What did the Dolphins say?

WHAT WE KNOW: The team said it has a strong relationship with the police department but was "saddened" by the altercation and called for "swift and strong action against the officers."

"There are some officers who mistake their responsibility and commitment to serve with misguided power," the team said.

What happens next?

WHAT WE KNOW: Hill's attorneys have threatened to sue the department and officers.

WHAT WE DON'T KNOW: Whether Hill's attorneys will follow through. In the end, they might not think it's worth it or want to put their client through a deposition and the discovery process, where the defendants could demand access to personal records and information.

## Congress bestows its highest honor on the 13 troops killed during Afghanistan withdrawal

By STEPHEN GROVES and ELLEN KNICKMEYER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Speaker Mike Johnson on Tuesday presented Congress' highest honor — the Congressional Gold Medal — to 13 U.S. service members who were killed during the disastrous withdrawal from Afghanistan, even as the politics of a presidential election swirled around the event.

Both Democrats and Republicans supported the legislation to posthumously honor the 13 U.S. troops, who were killed along with more than 170 Afghans in a suicide bombing at the Abbey Gate at Kabul's Airport in August 2021. President Joe Biden signed the legislation in December 2021. On Tuesday, the top Republican and Democratic leaders for both the House and Senate spoke at a somber ceremony in the Capitol Rotunda, hailing the lives and sacrifices of the service members.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer called on the lawmakers gathered to "ensure the sacrifices of all our servicemembers were not in vain."

"We must care for them and their families and defend the values of freedom and democracy they so nobly fought for," Schumer, a New York Democrat, said.

But rather than a unifying moment, the event took place against the backdrop of a bitter back-and-forth over who is to blame for the rushed and deadly evacuation from Kabul. Johnson, a Louisiana Republican and ally of Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump, scheduled the ceremony just hours before the first debate between Trump and Democrat Kamala Harris.

"They lost their lives because of this administration's catastrophic withdrawal from Afghanistan," Johnson said at a news conference minutes before the ceremony.

Then as the speaker opened the ceremony, he took another jab at how the Biden administration has defended its handling of the final months of America's longest war.

"To the families who are here, I know many of you have yet to hear these words, so I will say them: we are sorry," Johnson said. "The United States government should have done everything to protect our troops, those fallen and wounded at Abbey Gate deserved our best efforts, and the families who have been left to pick up the pieces continue to deserve transparency, appreciation and recognition."

Republicans on the House Foreign Affairs Committee also released a scathing investigation on Sunday into the withdrawal that cast blame on Biden's administration and minimized the role of Trump, who had signed the withdrawal deal with the Taliban.

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White House national security spokesman John Kirby on Monday criticized the House report as partisan and one-sided and said it revealed little new information as well as contained several inaccuracies. He noted that evacuation plans had started well before the pullout and the fall of Kabul "moved a lot faster than anyone could have anticipated."

He also acknowledged that during the evacuation "not everything went according to plan. Nothing ever does."

"We hold ourselves all accountable for that," he said of the deaths.

Top military and White House officials attended the ceremony Tuesday, including Secretary of Veterans Affairs Denis McDonough and Air Force Gen. Charles Q. Brown, Jr. the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Pentagon reviews have concluded that the suicide bombing was not preventable, and that suggestions troops may have seen the would-be bomber were not true.

Regardless, Trump has thrust the withdrawal, with the backing from some of the families of the Americans killed, into the center of his campaign. Last month, his political team distributed video of him attending a wreath-laying ceremony for the fallen service members at Arlington National Cemetery on the third anniversary of the bombing, despite the cemetery's prohibition on partisan activity on the grounds as well as an altercation with a cemetery employee who was trying to make sure the campaign followed those rules.

The Gold Star military families who invited him to the Arlington ceremony have defended Trump's actions. At a fiery news conference outside the Capitol Monday, they implored for the House report to be taken seriously and demanded accountability for those in leadership during evacuation from Kabul.

"President Trump is certainly not perfect. But he's a far better choice, in my opinion, than the mess that Biden and Harris have created since Kabul," said Paula Knauss Selph, whose son Ryan Knauss died in the Abbey Gate attack.

At the ceremony Tuesday, Coral Doolittle, whose son Humberto A. Sanchez was killed, spoke on behalf of the Gold Star families and asked the American public to "always remember the 13. Say their names, speak their names, and tell their stories."

While Trump and Republicans have sought to link Harris to the withdrawal as a campaign issue, and Harris has said she was the last person in the room when Biden made his decision, neither watchdog reviews nor the 18-month investigation by House Republicans have identified any instance where the vice president had a significant impact on decision-making.

Still, House Republicans argued that Harris, as well as Biden's national security team, needed to face accountability for the consequences of the deadly withdrawal.

"Kamala Harris wants to be the president of the United States. She wants to be commander in chief. She needs to answer for this report immediately," said Rep. Mike Lawler, a New York Republican on the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

McCaul, the committee chairman, also defended the timing of the report by saying that the committee's investigation had to overcome resistance from the Biden administration.

He cast the investigation as a "truth-seeking mission" rather than a partisan endeavor, but also bragged that out of all the investigations that House Republicans have launched into the Biden administration in the last two years "this investigation is the one they fear the most because they know ... they were wrong."

Most assessments have concluded Trump and Biden share blame for the disastrous end to the 20-year war, which saw enemy Taliban take over Afghanistan again before the last American troops even flew out of the Kabul airport. Over 2,000 U.S. troops were killed in Afghanistan.

The main U.S. government watchdog for the war points to Trump's 2020 deal with the Taliban 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 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.

Both Trump and Biden kept up the staged withdrawal of U.S. forces, and in Trump's case sharply cut back important U.S. airstrikes in the Taliban, even though the Taliban failed to enter into substantive negotiations with the U.S.-backed civilian government as required by Trump's withdrawal deal.



The top Democrat on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Rep. Gregory Meeks of New York, also issued a memorandum in response to the GOP report, saying he was concerned by the "attempts to politicize the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan."

"Republicans' partisan attempts to garner headlines rather than acknowledge the full facts and substance of their investigation have only increased with the heat of an election season," Meeks said.

## Americans' inflation-adjusted incomes rebounded to pre-pandemic levels last year

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The inflation-adjusted median income of U.S. households rebounded last year to roughly its 2019 level, overcoming the biggest price spike in four decades to restore most Americans' purchasing power.

The proportion of Americans living in poverty also fell slightly last year, to 11.1%, from 11.5% in 2022. But the ratio of women's median earnings to men's widened for the first time in more than two decades as men's income rose more than women's in 2023.

The latest data came Tuesday in an annual report from the Census Bureau, which said the median household income, adjusted for inflation, rose 4% to \$80,610 in 2023, up from \$77,450 in 2022. It was the first increase since 2019, and is essentially unchanged from that year's figure of \$81,210, officials said. (The median income figure is the point at which half the population is above and half below and is less distorted by extreme incomes than the average.)

"We are back to that pre-COVID peak that we experienced," said Liana Fox, assistant division chief in the Social, Economic and Housing Statistics Division at the Census Bureau.

The figures could become a talking point in the presidential campaign if Vice President Kamala Harris were to point to them as evidence that Americans' financial health has largely recovered after inflation peaked at 9.1% in 2022. On Wednesday, economists predict that the government will report that inflation fell from 2.9% in July to 2.6% in August. The Federal Reserve, whose target level for inflation is 2%, is poised to start cutting interest rates next week.

Former President Donald Trump might counter that household income grew much faster in his first three years in office than in the first three years of the Biden-Harris administration, though income fell during his administration after the pandemic struck in 2020.

The data showed that while the typical American household regained its 2019 purchasing power in 2023, it essentially experienced no rise in living standards over that time. That is a sharp difference from the preceding four years, when inflation-adjusted median incomes rose 14% from 2015 through 2019.

The data is based on pre-tax incomes, including Social Security and other benefit programs, though it excludes noncash benefits such as food stamps and Medicaid.

The jump in incomes reflects solid job creation last year, which helped reduce the unemployment rate to a half-century low of 3.4% in April 2023. The proportion of Americans in the so-called prime age group of 25-to-54-year-olds with jobs averaged 80.7% last year, the highest level in 23 years. Economists often focus on prime-age workers because they exclude younger people, who are often still in school, and older workers, who are more likely to retire or reduce their hours.

By racial groups, median household income rose 5.4% for whites to \$84,630, increased 2.8% for Black Americans to \$56,490 and was unchanged for Hispanics at \$65,540. Asian incomes were also largely unchanged at \$112,800.

While the overall poverty rate declined from 2022 to 2023, under an alternative measure of income the proportion of children in poverty rose from 12.4% to 13.7%. The bump in child poverty comes two years after it had plunged to just 5.2%, when the pandemic-era expansion of the child tax credit provided enhanced benefits to families. But the credit expired in 2022.

"If you want to reduce poverty in the short run, you transfer income to poor families," said Steven Dur-

lauf, an economist at the University of Chicago.

Census also calculated that 92% of Americans had health care in 2023, largely unchanged from the previous year, though the proportion of uninsured children ticked up a half-point to 5.8%.

## **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."

## A woman is killed near Moscow after more than 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 and injuring eight, officials said Tuesday, in one of the biggest drone attacks on Russian soil in the 2 1/2-year war.

A woman died 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 shut three airports just outside Moscow — Vnukovo, Domodedovo and Zhukovsky — forcing 48 flights to be diverted to other airports, according to Russia's civil aviation authority, Rosaviatsia.

The first two airports, which are Russia's second- and third-busiest, reopened in the morning but Zhukovsky was still closed in the afternoon because law enforcement officers were dealing with drone debris there, an airport spokesperson told the Interfax news agency.

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 has pummeled Ukraine with missiles, glide bombs and its own drones, killing over 10,000 civilians since the war began in 2022, according to the United Nations.

Meanwhile, the Ukrainian air force said Russia launched 46 Shahed drones and two missiles at Ukraine overnight. The air force said it downed 36 of the drones.

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

Ukrainian officials have complained that weapons pledged by the country's Western partners fall short of what their military needs and commonly arrive long after 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 Sobyenin 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.

Ukrainian officials declined to comment on the attack.

As the war drags on, Russian President Vladimir Putin has been expanding his alliances:

The Russian military on Tuesday began massive naval and air drills, involving over 90,000 troops and over 400 warships, that China will also take part in, the Defense Ministry said.

Putin is also beefing up his military arsenal with Iranian ballistic missiles, the United States and Britain said Tuesday.

Moscow and the surrounding region have often come under attack throughout the war.

In May 2023, Russian officials said Ukraine tried to attack the Kremlin with drones which lightly damaged the roof of the palace that includes one of Putin's official residences.

In August 2023, a drone attack on Moscow's prestigious business district blew out part of a section of windows on a high-rise building and sent glass cascading to the streets, unsettling Muscovites. The attacks exposed gaps in the city and region's air defenses.



## Limits to anti-nausea pill coverage wear on cancer patients and doctors

By TOM MURPHY AP Health Writer

Cancer patients can ward off waves of vomiting after treatment with a relatively cheap anti-nausea pill, but some are running into coverage limits.

Doctors say restrictions on the number of tablets patients receive can hurt care. Pharmacy benefit managers say their limits guard against overuse, and they offer workarounds to get more tablets.

In between sit patients, who might ration pills or opt for less effective help for a dreaded side effect of radiation or chemotherapy.

The conflict shows how an array of coverages and poor communication can complicate even simple acts of care in the fragmented U.S. health care system.

"This is sort of the dirty underbelly of the current health care environment," said oncologist Dr. Fumiko Chino. "Insurance companies and pharmacy benefit managers are somehow weirdly ending up in my exam room, standing between me and my patients."

Steven Manetta takes at least a half dozen pills daily to help keep a form of leukemia in remission. For more than a year, he rationed his go-to anti-nausea pill, ondansetron, known by the brand-name Zofran.

Manetta's coverage through CVS Caremark paid for 18 ondansetron pills every 21 days. That forced him to sometimes use alternatives that make him extremely drowsy in order to stretch his supply. He only recently got approval for a 90-day supply.

"It's just like an extra thing to think about all the time," the 33-year-old Lemont, Illinois, resident said. "When you're on so many medications, the ones with the least side effects are the ones you always want to reach for."

Ondansetron hit the U.S. market more than 30 years ago. It was the first in a series of drugs that gave doctors a better way to control nausea and vomiting, said Dr. Alexi Wright, a Dana-Farber Cancer Institute oncologist who teaches at Harvard.

Wright and other cancer specialists call ondansetron a cornerstone treatment because of its relative safety, effectiveness and limited side effects.

The price doesn't hurt either: Thirty tablets of ondansetron can cost under \$12 through prescription discount websites.

Pharmacists and doctors say they've dealt with restrictions on anti-nausea drugs like ondansetron for years. Wright says she finds the limits "infuriating" in part because the drug is affordable.

More than half the plans sold on the U.S. individual insurance marketplace limit the number of ondansetron tablets that patients can get, according to preliminary results from a study by Chino and Michael Anne Kyle, a University of Pennsylvania researcher.

Pharmacist Yen Nguyen frequently sees these restrictions, including the limits from CVS Caremark that Manetta encountered.

"Over four or five months of chemotherapy, you're fighting for dimes and nickels here," said Nguyen, executive director of pharmacy for the Houston-area practice Oncology Consultants.

Jennette Murphy paid cash for ondansetron when her cancer treatment started earlier this year because she couldn't get coverage for the amount her doctor requested. Then she got a letter telling her the drug wouldn't be covered.

"It freaked me out," the Tehachapi, California, resident said. "I'm like, 'Really? Have you ever been through chemo?'"

Pharmacy benefit managers say they set limits based partly on the treatment and offer several ways for doctors to request more.

Prime Therapeutics limits 4- and 8-milligram prescriptions of ondansetron to 21 tablets over 30 days. That helps provide "maximum dosing" for seven days of treatment a month, chief clinical officer David Lassen said in an email.

He said quantity limits are approved by independent doctors and pharmacists. They help prevent waste

and excessive use that may not be safe.

CVS Caremark spokesman Mike DeAngelis said his company bases limits on Food and Drug Administration guidelines. He added that the company can make a decision on requests for more tablets in less than 24 hours.

Doctors say they don't always know when patients will need more.

Coverage limits vary, and some patients may not tell their doctor that they got a smaller-than-desired amount. Also, nausea intensity can be hard to gauge with newer treatments.

Chino says she wants patients to start with 90 tablets of ondansetron, enough to take the drug three times a day for a month if needed. But she often sees limits of 21 or 30 tablets.

"The fact that there's still restrictive patterns on this very useful medication is insane," said Chino, who recently moved from Memorial Sloan Kettering in New York to MD Anderson in Houston.

Limits can hurt patients who have big copayments for each refill or trouble getting to the drugstore, noted Dr. Ramy Sedhom, an oncologist and palliative care specialist with Penn Medicine Princeton Health.

"I have a lot of patients who only go to the pharmacy once a month when their niece or nephew is in town to pick up the (prescriptions)," he said.

If patients run out of ondansetron, even for a few days, uncontrolled vomiting can send them to emergency rooms or force a treatment pause, doctors say.

Murphy, the cancer patient, has avoided all of that. She said coverage started for ondansetron after her City of Hope cancer center doctor requested it.

She faces a stretch of chemotherapy cycles that will extend well into the fall. The treatments leave her bedridden for days with nausea even while taking ondansetron.

"I would hate to not have it," she said.

## **Tyreek Hill's traffic stop revives discussion about the realities faced by Black drivers**

By AARON MORRISON, ALANIS THAMES and TERRY TANG Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — After his traffic stop in Miami on Sunday, Tyreek Hill talked about "the talk" — instructions passed down in Black families for generations about what to do when pulled over by police.

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.

Heeding that advice in the heat of the moment can be hard, as Hill's own experience showed when the star wide receiver for the Miami Dolphins was stopped for speeding and reckless driving before the team's first game of the season.

His interaction with police — captured in a now-viral cellphone video and body camera footage — escalated and is yet again prompting a larger discussion about the realities of "driving while Black." According to a national law enforcement survey, traffic stops of Black drivers are more likely to include the threat or use of force.

Body camera video shows Hill rolled down the driver's side window and handed his license to a Miami-Dade County officer knocking on the window. Hill then told the officer repeatedly to stop knocking, before he rolled the darkly tinted window back up.

After a back and forth about the window, the body camera video shows an officer pulled Hill out of his car by his arm and head and then forced him face first onto the ground on a street outside the team's stadium.

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

"It happened so fast that it caught me off guard," Hill said in a postgame interview on Sunday. Later, he said he was "embarrassed" and "shell-shocked" by the situation.

'If I wasn't Tyreek Hill'

For many, Hill's encounter with police drives home a reality that Black men in particular disproportion-

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ately experience what he did. Even if the encounter doesn't end in tragedy, it confirms an ongoing need for the talk.

Hill wondered what would have happened if he wasn't a celebrity.

"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," he said in a CNN on Monday.

Fact of life for Black Americans

Other Black Dolphins players said they were used to seeing the kind of police conduct that Hill experienced.

"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 countrywide 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."

According to a Bureau of Justice Statistics' 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.

Black drivers were more likely than white drivers to experience no enforcement action during their most recent traffic stop, according to the report. 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.

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.

Grant-Thomas also 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."

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.

Police and NFL players

Many Black NFL players have long 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,



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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."

## 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.

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.

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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."

## Today in History: September 11, al-Qaeda attacks the United States

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, Sept. 11, the 255th day of 2024. There are 111 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Sept. 11, 2001, nearly 3,000 people were killed as 19 al-Qaida hijackers seized control of four jetliners, sending two of the planes into New York's World Trade Center, one into the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia, and the fourth into a field in western Pennsylvania. It remains the deadliest terror attack in history.

Also on this date:

In 1789, Alexander Hamilton was appointed the first U.S. Secretary of the Treasury.

In 1814, an American fleet scored a decisive victory over the British in the Battle of Lake Champlain in the War of 1812.

In 1936, Boulder Dam — later renamed the Hoover Dam — began operation as President Franklin D. Roosevelt pressed a button in Washington to signal the startup of the dam's first hydroelectric generator.

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In 1941, groundbreaking took place for the Pentagon.

In 1954, the Miss America pageant made its network TV debut on ABC.

In 1973, Chilean President Salvador Allende (ah-YEN'-day) died during a violent military coup led by General Augusto Pinochet.

In 1985, Pete Rose of the Cincinnati Reds broke Ty Cobb's MLB career hits record with his 4,192nd hit.

In 2008, presidential candidates John McCain and Barack Obama put aside politics as they visited ground zero together on the anniversary of 9/11 to honor its victims.

In 2012, a mob armed with guns and grenades launched a fiery nightlong attack on a U.S. diplomatic outpost and a CIA annex in Benghazi, Libya, killing U.S. Ambassador Chris Stevens and three other Americans.

In 2023, over 4,000 people died and thousands more were missing after heavy rain from Storm Daniel caused two dams to collapse, flooding the city of Derna, Libya.

Today's Birthdays: Composer Arvo Pärt is 89. Film director Brian De Palma is 84. Singer-actor-dancer Lola Falana is 82. Musician Mickey Hart is 81. Guitarist Leo Kottke is 78. Actor Amy Madigan is 74. Rock musician Tommy Shaw (Styx) is 71. Sportscaster Lesley Visser is 71. Actor Scott Patterson is 66. Actor/director Roxann Dawson is 66. Actor John Hawkes is 65. Actor Virginia Madsen is 63. Musician-composer Moby is 59. Singer Harry Connick Jr. is 57. Actor Taraji (tuh-RAH'-jee) P. Henson is 54. Rapper Ludacris is 47. Football Hall of Famer Ed Reed is 46. Country singer Charles Kelley (Lady A) is 43. Actor Elizabeth Henstridge is 37. Actor Tyler Hoechlin (HEK'-lihn) is 37.