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Wednesday, Sept. 18

School Breakfast: Muffins.

School Lunch: Baked potato with toppings.

Senior Menu: Turkey sub sandwich, lettuce and tomato, macaroni salad with peas, broccoli, tropical fruit.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Pastor at Rosewood Court, 10 a.m.; Confirmation, time to be determined.

Groton C&MA: Kids' Club, Youth Group, Adult Bible Study at 7 pm.

St. John's Lutheran: Confirmation, 3:45 p.m.

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PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445

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



United Methodist: Community coffee hour, 9:30 a.m.; Groton Ad Council, 7 p.m.

3rd/4th and 5th/6th Football at Hitchcock - 6:30PM

Thursday, Sept. 19

School Breakfast: Breakfast pizza.

School Lunch: Lasagna bake, garlic toast.

Senior Menu: Lasagna bake, tossed salad with dressing, melon, cookie, garlic bread.

Boys Golf at Hankinson, N.D., 10 a.m.

Cross Country at Lee Park, Aberdeen, 4 p.m.

JH Football at Britton-Hecla, 4:30 p.m.

Volleyball hosts Clark/Willow Lake: 7th/C at 5 p.m., 8th/JV at 6 p.m., varsity to follow

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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.

Pagers Explode in Lebanon

At least 11 people were killed and close to 4,000 were injured yesterday after hundreds of communication devices simultaneously detonated across Lebanon. Hezbollah officials claimed the incident was a coordinated Israeli attack on the militant group's members, with Lebanon's foreign minister promising retaliation.

The hourlong incident primarily involved recently issued pagers, low-tech electronic devices used by Hezbollah to circumvent Israeli surveillance. Israel reportedly planted explosives in the devices before they were imported to Lebanon, according to US and other officials. Videos showed the devices exploding in public places, with reports the pagers would beep several times before detonating. Hospital workers reported dozens of injuries to the eyes, hands, and waist. An eight-year-old girl and the son of a Lebanese lawmaker were among those killed, while Iran's ambassador to Lebanon was reportedly injured.

The attack comes amid an 11-month conflict between Lebanon and Israel since Hamas—a Hezbollah ally—attacked Israel. On Monday, Israel made returning its civilians to its northern border area near Lebanon an official war objective amid months of rocket attacks there.

Diddy Indictment Unsealed

Hip-hop mogul Sean "Diddy" Combs was indicted yesterday on federal charges of racketeering, sex trafficking, and transportation to engage in prostitution following his arrest in Manhattan Monday night. The 54-year-old music executive has pleaded not guilty and was ordered to stay in jail while awaiting trial.

Prosecutors allege Combs used his business empire—spanning music, alcohol, and fashion—and his employees to facilitate and conceal criminal activities. Combs has faced multiple lawsuits this year, including one filed in November by his former partner, R&B artist Cassie, who accused him of years of physical assault and rape. The indictment includes several allegations that date back 15 years. Federal agents raided Combs' California and Florida homes in March, where they allegedly found narcotics and more than 1,000 bottles of oil and lubricant.

The charges make Combs the highest-profile figure in the music industry to face federal sexual misconduct charges since R. Kelly, who is currently serving a 30-year term.

Instagram's Teen Overhaul

Instagram began introducing new restrictive accounts yesterday for users under the age of 18 to address growing concerns about social media's impact on youth. The overhaul is estimated to affect over 100 million accounts worldwide and comes as parent company Meta faces a lawsuit from 33 states alleging its platforms harm children's mental health.

New accounts for minors in the US, the UK, Canada, and Australia will be set to private automatically while existing accounts will transition to private over the next 60 days. Default settings will limit who can contact minors and what content minors can see. Upcoming features include silencing notifications from 10 pm to 7 am and prompting users to close the app after 60 minutes. Users aged 16 and above can adjust their settings manually. Meta will introduce these accounts in the European Union later this year and in other countries in 2025.

Meta is also testing age verification processes, including using AI to prevent minors from misrepresenting their age. See stats on social media use among teens.

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Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

The 2024 Primetime Emmys bring in 6.9 million viewers, a 54% jump over the previous broadcast. California Gov. Gavin Newsom (D) signs law aimed at protecting actors from AI digital clones being used without their consent.

Team USA gymnast Jordan Chiles files appeal with Swiss court in effort to overturn decision to take away an individual bronze medal she won at the Paris Olympics.

Shortlist of six novels selected for prestigious Booker Prize for fiction, including a record five female authors; winner set to be announced Nov. 12.

Science & Technology

New estimates project deaths from drug-resistant infections to rise by 70% by 2050, claiming roughly 2 million lives per year.

Astronomers propose measuring the wobble of Mars along its rotational axis to test whether dark matter—an unknown substance making up about 26% of the universe's matter—could be made of tiny black holes.

Social messaging platform Snap unveils new operating system for its fifth generation smart glasses; debut signals a renewed push by the company into augmented reality.

Business & Markets

US stock markets close mixed (S&P 500 -0.0%, Dow -0.0%, Nasdaq +0.2%) ahead of anticipated Federal Reserve decision to lower benchmark interest rates at end of two-day policy meeting today.

BlackRock and Microsoft to launch \$30B investment fund to build data centers and secure energy sources to power resource-heavy AI systems.

AT&T to pay \$13M to settle Federal Communications Commission investigation tied to 2023 cloud data hack; issue is separate from hack revealed this year to have compromised 73 million customers' Social Security numbers and passwords.

Politics & World Affairs

House Speaker Mike Johnson (R, LA-4) to hold vote today on stopgap bill ahead of Sept. 30 government shutdown deadline; bill includes provision requiring proof of citizenship to register to vote.

Democratic-led bill to establish nationwide right to in-vitro fertilization falls short of 60 votes needed to advance in Senate.

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis (R) to launch investigation into assassination attempt on former President Donald Trump, parallel to FBI investigation.

Canada's ruling Liberal Party, led by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, loses Montreal parliamentary seat in special election; defeat is the second recent upset for Liberals following loss of long-held Toronto seat in June.

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GDILIVE.COM

10th Anniversary of GDILIVE.COM!



Monday, Sept. 16
Coronation, 7:30 p.m.

Tuesday, Sept. 17
Soccer in Groton vs. Dakota Valley
Girls at 4 p.m., Boys at 5:30 p.m.



Thursday, Sept. 19
Volleyball
hosts Clark/Willow Lake
Varsity at 7:15 p.m.

Friday, Sept. 20



Homecoming
Parade
1 p.m.



Boys Soccer
hosts Custer,
4 p.m.



Football hosts
Deuel,
7 p.m.

Saturday, Sept. 21
Volleyball at
Hamlin Tournament



\$5 ticket or GDI Subscription required to watch the events.

Groton Area soccer teams beat Dakota Valley

The boys soccer team won its first game of the season with a 5-2 win over Dakota Valley. Logan Olson scored the first goal on an assist by Ethan Kroll at the 34:35 mark in the first half. Olson scored moments later at the 33:58 mark to make it 2-0, Groton Area. Easton Weber scored with 25:36 left in the first half and Karson Zak scored with 62 seconds left in the half as Groton Area took a 4-0 lead at half time. Dakota Valley's Cardona scored with 37:18 left in the game to make it 4-1. Ethan Kroll scored for Groton Area with 22:49 left to make it 5-1. Yahya Luqman scored for Dakota Valley with 8:51 left in the game for the final score of 5-2.

The girls won their game, 1-0, with the lone goal set up by a corner kick and finished by Laila Roberts with 5:53 left in the game.

The girls final game of the regular season is October 5 at Garretson. The boys will host Custer on Friday at 4 p.m. and Hot Springs on Saturday at 11 a.m.

Both games were 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 Meathouse in Andover.

- Paul Kosel



Jaedyn Penning (goal keeper) and Kennedy Hansen. (Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



Ethan Kroll
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)

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Drake Peterson
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



Jerica Locke
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



Ethan Kroll gets his ankle wrapped up from the athletic trainer. (Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)

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Haden Harder
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



Brooklyn Hansen
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)

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Karson Zak
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



McKenna Tietz
(Photo by Paul Kosel)

Girls Standings		Season		Seed	Pts	
#	Name	W	L	T	PCT	PTS
1	 Groton Area	5	1	1	.786	43.688
2	 Sioux Falls Christian	5	1	2	.750	43.375
3	 Dakota Valley	4	2	0	.667	42.286
4	 West Central	6	2	0	.750	41.625
5	 St. Thomas More	3	5	0	.375	38.875
6	 Garretson	3	4	1	.438	37.722
7	 Belle Fourche	1	6	1	.188	37.062
8	 Vermillion	0	7	0	.000	37.000

Monday's Cross Country Results from Webster Meet

Girls JV 3K Run: 12, Sydney Holmes, 17:12.16.
Girls Varsity 5K Run: 6, Faith Traphagen, 21:27.98.

Boys JV 3K Run: 27, Logan Clocksene, 25:46.62.
Boys Varsity 5K Run: 32, Jayden Schwan, 22:00.32.

Girls 3K Middle School Run: 8, Andi Iverson, 16:52.27; 28, Rayna Loeschke, 21:08.43.

Boys 3K Middle School Run: 8, Grayden Zeck, 14:54.03; 12, Blake Malsam, 15:34.95;



Groton 6th graders warm up prior to their Junior High run. Two new girl runners joined the squad this week (L-R) Andi Iverson and Rayna Loeschke. Boys (L-R) Grady Zeck and Blake Malsam. (Photo Courtesy Bruce Babcock)



Groton Area Cross Country runners L-R Jayden Schwan and Kason Oswald prior to their varsity boys run in Webster on Monday.

(Photo Courtesy Bruce Babcock)



Jayden Schwan and Kason Oswald jockey for position at the start of the varsity boys run. (Photo Courtesy Bruce Babcock)

Redfield Golf Meet Results

Team Scores: Aberdeen Roncalli 307, Watertown JV 315, Groton Area 316, Sioux Valley 324, Milbank 332, Sisseton 354, Redfield 370.

Individual Results: 5, Brevin Fliehs, 74; 9, Carter Simon, 77; 12, Logan Pearson, 81; 17, Jace Johnson, 84; 18, Jarrett Erdmann, 85; 25, Jayden Schwan, 88;

Block to be blocked for soccer games; stop sign discussion, sewer system improvement discussion continues

by Elizabeth Varin

Be prepared for traffic cones on West Third Avenue, at least a few more this year.

The City Council agreed to allow a block between the soccer fields and ice skating rink to be closed during high school soccer games.

Discussion came after the council approved a bid in early September to add permanent swinging gates that would be able to block the roadway. However, confusion over pricing had the item back before the council Tuesday.



Groton Area Superintendent Joe Schwan puts out the cones and bars prior to a soccer game.

"It's safety for the kids," said Councilman Brian Bahr. "That's the main thing."

The original bid totaled around \$3,600 for two gates, and four gates would be required at the field. That would bring the total more than \$7,000.

However, Groton Area School District Superintendent Joe Schwan said the current measure seems to be working during high school soccer games. He was concerned about closing part of the block would cause some issues.

"I thought, going into it, we would get some negative feedback about parking distance because you can probably park 30 cars on that block, so people having to park further away," he said. "I have not had one negative comment about that since we started with just the few games we've had."

"People prefer that block to be closed, and I think if a car turns down that road, it's going to be a mess," Schwan said. "We've got to stop traffic on the ends. It's going to be more dangerous if people have to back out of there." There was previous discussion of blocking off just 50 feet in the middle of the block.

Schwan said, while having a fence there would be fine, having school staff put out the cones a couple hours before the game has worked well so far.

Council members also expressed concern about the cost of adding a permanent swinging gate.

Seven thousand dollars could buy a lot of gravel for another project at the ice skating rink, said Councilman Kevin Nehls.

While no final vote came for the swinging gates, Mayor Scott Hanlon said, "if anything, we have this thing decided, shutting the whole block."

Stop sign discussion nixed

Discussion continued about whether a stop sign should be added a couple of blocks east of the high school.

At a meeting earlier this month, the council had discussed whether a stop sign is needed on North Third Street at the intersection of East Fourth Avenue. There is an east-west facing pair of stop signs at the intersection, but not a pair facing north and south.

Mayor Scott Hanlon asked Police Chief Stacy Mayou if he saw a need for the stop signs, to which Mayou replied that he didn't see it as necessary.

"You can't protect everyone all the time from everything," Mayou said, citing the Federal Highway Administration's campaigns to wear seat belts, not drive intoxicated and avoiding distracted driving. "I think

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if we've got too many stop signs, people are going to start just ignoring them worse than they do now. "You can put a stop sign on every corner, and you can't guarantee everybody's safety," he said. Councilman Kevin Nehls added that he worked on that street all last week. While he expected traffic, especially when school got out, he didn't see any issues. Councilman Brian Bahr motioned to not install a stop sign there, with Nehls seconding the motion and the council unanimously approving not installing a new stop sign.

City looks to state for sewer system improvement funding

The city is moving forward with asking the state to help fund sewer system improvements. The City Council voted to submit an application to the state's Department of Natural Resources for funding – either grant or low-interest loan – to replace a lift station, add an additional force main and add a new wastewater cell to the city's system. Growth in the city has been hampered by a wastewater system that can't handle much more. The city has also been cited about twice a year for ammonia levels that are too high. The city is looking to be added to the state water plan, which would allow it to get funding for the improvements. Repairing the Aspen lift station and adding another force main is estimated to cost \$3,892,000. The other project – adding a new wastewater cell and wetlands – is estimated to cost \$2,695,000. The projects may come with a big increase to resident's wastewater rate. Currently the rate is a flat \$20 plus \$5 per 1,000 gallons per user per month. To be considered for the grant funding, the city would need to raise its wastewater rate to at least \$70, said April Buller, project manager at IMEG. However, that grant funding is not guaranteed if the city has the recommended wastewater rate. The Department of Natural Resources doesn't have as much money as they have during the past few years as American Rescue Plan funds are gone. The city could still receive a loan if the wastewater rate isn't that high, she said. Councilwoman Karyn Babcock was hesitant about that type of rate increase. "I don't know how we're going to go from \$20 to \$70 on the chance of getting a grant," she said. "I don't know how we're going to do that."

- The city may lose more than \$100,000 from its general fund with a sales tax cut on the November ballot. Initiated Measure 28, which would prohibit food and grocer taxes, could lead to the city losing sales tax revenue, said City Finance Officer Douglas Heinrich. That could lead to a revenue drop of more than \$100,000 to the city's general fund.
- The city's tax levy this year is \$563,748, according to an ordinance directing the city finance officer certify the amount. The city also has a \$230,000 opt-out request. The total requested is \$793,748 for the general fund.
- A lawn mower, wooden desk, snow plow and speed monitor have joined the city's surplus list. The city is accepting offers for a 2004 Snapper Mower/Bagger featuring a 23 horse powered engine with 1,600 hours (with a \$500 recommended value). A 12-foot heavy duty snowplow with a recommended value of \$900 is also available, as is an older speed monitor trailer, though the council want to see if a surrounding community needs one. A heavy, large wooden desk with drawers and tempered glass protector is also available for free, though it needs to be picked up.
- Mayor Scott Hanlon read a proclamation declaring September 10 as Hunger Action Day in the city of Groton.

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Decades Day Winners

It was Decades Day at the middle/high school on Tuesday for homecoming week. Pictured in back, left to right, are Tori Schuster (6), Natalia Warrington (11), Ashlynn Warrington (10), Addison Hoffman (10), Teagan Hanten (10), TC Schuster (9) and Keegan Harry (11); in front, left to right, are Adeline Kotzer (8), Kendyll Kroll (6), Nolan Bahr (7) and Jackson Furman (9); not pictured are Easton Larson (6), Wesley Borg (8) and Abby Yeadon (12). (Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



Scavenger Hunt

Monte Mason helps his grandson, Harrison Morris, with the scavenger hunt in downtown Groton. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

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Groton City August Financial Report

August 2024

Dacotah Bank Checking Acct	\$ 4,105,905.35
General Cash	\$ 300.00
SD FIT Acct	\$ 1,705,500.78
Dacotah Bank Water CD	\$ 85,849.13
Cemetery Perp Care CD	\$ 32,876.69
Total	\$ 5,930,431.95

Invested In		
Cash	\$ 300.00	0.01%
Dacotah Bank	\$ 4,224,631.17	71.24%
SD Fit	\$ 1,705,500.78	28.76%
Total	\$ 5,930,431.95	100.00%

	Beginning	Revenue	Expenses	Transfers	Ending
	Cash Balance				Cash Balance
General	\$ 1,427,329.33	\$ 113,734.27	\$ 232,297.00		\$ 1,308,766.60
Bed, Board, Booze Tax	\$ 208,984.93	\$ 3,613.68			\$ 212,598.61
Baseball Uniforms	\$ 6,981.75				\$ 6,981.75
Airport	\$ 19,556.92	\$ 11,974.75			\$ 31,531.67
**Debt Service	\$ 36,039.28				\$ 36,039.28
Cemetery Perpetual Care	\$ 34,756.69				\$ 34,756.69
Water	\$ 713,583.04	\$ 61,716.23	\$ 81,393.82		\$ 693,905.45
Electric	\$ 2,943,255.94	\$ 158,864.90	\$ 155,527.84		\$ 2,946,593.00
Wastewater	\$ 342,611.70	\$ 25,573.86	\$ 20,027.76		\$ 348,157.80
Solid Waste	\$ 94,018.53	\$ 11,930.29	\$ 10,475.86		\$ 95,472.96
Family Crisis	\$ 9,715.57				\$ 9,715.57
Sales Tax	\$ 12,318.67	\$ 10,567.75	\$ 11,169.23		\$ 11,717.19
Employment	\$ 17,093.56		\$ 994.27		\$ 18,087.83
Utility Prepayments	\$ 73,212.92	\$ 289.58	\$ 188.37		\$ 73,314.13
Utility Deposits	\$ 97,144.34	\$ 500.00	\$ 1,050.00		\$ 96,594.34
Other	\$ 6,199.08				\$ 6,199.08
Totals	\$ 6,042,802.25	\$ 398,765.31	\$ 513,124.15	\$ -	\$ 5,930,431.95

**Debt to be Paid		
**2015 Refinance	\$ 1,675,000.00	by 12/1/2035
Total Debt	\$ 1,675,000.00	

Gov. Noem and Colleagues Urge NCAA to Fix NIL Settlement

PIERRE, S.D. – Today, Governor Kristi Noem and four of her fellow governors urged NCAA President Charlie Baker to restructure its settlement with student athletes on Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) sponsorships to fix the undue burden on smaller athletic programs in more rural states.

“Unfortunately, the proposed settlement is unfair for the colleges and universities in our states,” wrote Governor Noem and her colleagues. “In trying to rectify the issue of NIL payments, the NCAA must keep all student athletes across the country top of mind, not just those at athletic programs with the deepest pockets and greatest influence. We urge the NCAA to restructure the settlement to take the concerns of our colleges and universities, who make up a majority of your member conferences.”

You can find the full letter [here](#).

Earlier this month, a federal judge placed the settlement on hold and urged revisions. Last Tuesday, South Dakota filed a lawsuit against the NCAA seeking an injunction of this settlement so that the interests of smaller conferences are duly considered when restructuring another proposed settlement.

The letter points out that NIL sponsorships are more popular among Power Five athletic conferences, but the proposed settlement will hit colleges and universities outside of the Power Five with nearly \$1 billion in financial obligation.

“The settlement means our programs stand to lose hundreds of thousands of dollars per year. This may not seem like much to larger athletic programs, but to the student-athletes in our states, it is a significant hit to their programs,” continued Governor Noem and her colleagues.

Governor Noem was joined in signing the letter by Montana Governor Greg Gianforte, Idaho Governor Brad Little, North Dakota Governor Doug Burgum, and Wyoming Governor Mark Gordon.

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Hamlin Invitational Volleyball Tournament

September 21, 2024

Hamlin Education Center- 44577 188th St- Hayti, SD

Pool A

Dell Rapids

Groton

Tiospa Zina

Pool B

Castlewood

Florence Henry

Hamlin

Sisseton

Court 1-East Court

9:00

10:15 Dell Rapids vs Tiospa Zina

11:30 Groton vs Tiospa Zina

12:45 Groton vs Dell Rapids

2:00 Castlewood vs Florence Henry

3:15 Pool A 2 vs Pool B 2

4:30

Court 2- West Court

9:00 Hamlin vs Florence Henry

10:15 Castlewood vs Sisseton

11:30 Hamlin vs Castlewood

12:45 Sisseton vs Florence-Henry

2:00 Hamlin vs Sisseton

3:15 Pool A 1 vs Pool B 1

4:30 Pool A 3 vs Pool B 3

TIMES are approximate. WE WILL roll the schedule ahead if possible.

Format: All matches are best of three to 25 points (no cap). All necessary third games will be played to 25.(no cap)

Warmups: 15 minute warmup will be used prior to team's first match. 5 minute warmups will be used for subsequent matches. The multi-purpose gym will be available for warmups.

Official Book: The home team (first team listed) will be responsible to keep the official book.
If you are using a libero you will need to have a libero tracker.
Each team will need to provide a line judge. If we must provide a line judge it will be \$20/match.

Tie Breakers:

1. Match Record
2. Head to Head Record
3. Total Sets won in Pool Play
4. Least sets lost in Pool Play
5. Total Points allowed
6. Coin Toss

Awards: Medals will be given to first place

Entry Fee: \$125 per team- please bring with you the day of the tournament or mail to Hamlin Education Center.
Make Checks payable to Hamlin Schools.....Attention Todd Neuendorf

Officials: Nicole Yseth, Vonda Bjorklund, Beth Schutt, Brian Ries, Laura Armstrong, and Traci Bass

Rosters: Rosters will be taken from the SDHSAA website.

Admission: Adults \$5 Students \$3

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Week 4 Coaches Football Poll

11AAA

Harrisburg- 122 pts (18 1st place votes)
Sioux Falls Lincoln- 91 pts
Brandon Valley- 81 pts
Sioux Falls Jefferson- 61 pts
Bishop O'Gorman- 21 pts
Receiving votes: Sioux Falls Washington, Sioux Falls Roosevelt

11AA

Watertown- 138 pts (24 1st place votes)
Pierre- 88 pts
Spearfish- 85 pts
Yankton- 65 pts
Brookings- 45 pts
Receiving votes: Tea Area, Sturgis, Aberdeen Central

11A

Sioux Falls Christian- 106 pts (11 first place votes)
Canton- 101 pts
Lennox- 43 pts
Dell Rapids- 42 pts
Dakota Valley- 37 pts
Receiving votes: West Central, Tri-Valley

11B

Winner- 110 pts (22 1st place votes)
Elk Point-Jefferson- 74 pts
Sioux Valley- 71 pts
Woonsocket/Wessington Springs/Sanborn Central- 36 pts
Mt. Vernon/Plankinton- 30 pts
Receiving votes: Wagner, Bridgewater-Emery/Ethan

9AA

Parkston- 110 pts (19 1st place votes)
Hamlin- 86 pts
Elkton-Lake Benton- 70 pts
Tripp-Delmont/Armour/Andes Central/Dakota Christian- 33 pts
Viborg/Hurley- 19 pts
Receiving votes: Kimball/White Lake, Hill City

9A

Howard- 118 pts (22 1st place votes)
Wall- 80 pts
Warner- 70 pts
Wolsey-Wessington- 37 pts
Harding County/Bison- 29 pts
Receiving votes: Alcester-Hudson, Centerville

9B

Avon- 95 pts (19 1st place votes)
Dell Rapids St. Mary- 53 pts
Faulkton- 52 pts
Sully Buttes- 35 pts
Canistota- 25 pts
Receiving votes: Corsica-Stickney, Kadoka Area

The Life of Jackie Hein



Jacqueline Joyce (Jackie) Hein passed away 8/22/24 at her home in St. Anthony, MN.

Jackie was born 5/20/1944 the oldest child of W Robert & Verna (May) Hein. She lived on the farm and attended Andover Grade School and High School graduating as the Valedictorian in May of 1962.

Right after Graduation, she moved to Minneapolis, MN. When she first moved to Minnesota, she lived with her Aunt Elaine and Uncle Bud Braithwaite and their family for about 2 years. She bought her own condo in 1985 and still lived there at the time of her death.

She held a few bookkeeping/accounting jobs before accepting a position at Minnegasco/Centrepoint Energy in 1975 where she worked until she retired in 2015. She also worked part time for many years at the Good Shepherd Nursing Home in Minneapolis.

She enjoyed traveling during her working years and after her retirement. She also enjoyed trips to see her family in Washington, South Dakota & Illinois. She was an avid reader and enjoyed reading history books. After retirement she would enjoy Friday Night "Happy Hour" with her Mirror Lake Manor Condo friends and other activities including keeping in touch with her friends at Centrepoint Energy. She recently celebrated her 80th birthday with family and friends.

She is survived by her brother Thomas (Susan) Hein of Richland, WA; brother Steve (Ann) Hein of Huron, SD; brother Wayne (Patricia) Hein of Groton, SD; sister-in-law Corinne (the late Robert) Hein of Darien, IL; and Cousin Doug Braithwaite of Willmar, MN. She also leaves behind her nieces & nephews Laura Granschow, Valerie Schnulle, Emily Jensen, Cindy Ward, Angela McCallister, Brian Hein, Christopher Hein, Stephanie Hein, Tricia Keith, Cheryl Johnson, Tamera Locke, Debra Kurth & Jacqueline Hoff. She is survived by many great nieces/nephews, and the Hein/May/Braithwaite cousins.

She was preceded in death by her parents, maternal grandparents Richard & Nora May, paternal grandparents Charles & Gertrude Hein, her brother Robert Hein, infant niece Sarah, great nephews Jamal, Samuel & Dylan, great great nephew Stetson, Elaine & Bud Braithwaite, Jim, Dan & Lisa Braithwaite.

A Memorial Service will be held in Minneapolis on 9/28/24 @ 11: AM at the Washburn-McReavy Hillside Funeral Chapel - 2610 19th Ave Minneapolis, MN.

Visitation with the Family will be from 10:00-11:00 prior to the service.

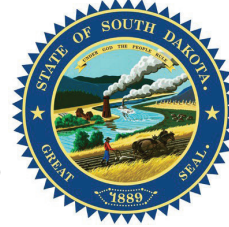
Her wishes were to be cremated and her ashes will be buried after a brief service at Sunset Memorial Gardens Aberdeen, SD on 9/30/24 @ 10:00 AM.

In lieu of flowers please donate to St John's Preschool, Groton, SD, your Church or favorite Charity.

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South Dakota



2024 BALLOT QUESTIONS

2024 Ballot Question Pamphlet compiled by the Office of the Secretary of State

The text of this pamphlet is available on our website at www.sdsos.gov. It's also available in large print, braille, or on tape by calling the South Dakota State Library at 1-800-423-6665.

The title, explanation, and effect of a vote for each ballot question were provided by the Attorney General. No other statements on this pamphlet reflect the opinion of the Secretary of State or Attorney General.

The information was compiled by the office of the Secretary of State as required by law and provided by the authors. The information does not reflect the position of the Secretary of State's office regarding the legality or effect of the amendments or measures. The Secretary of State is not responsible for the contents, objectivity, or accuracy of the statements written by the proponent and opponent authors in this brochure.

12-13-23. Distribution of public information. The secretary of state shall distribute public information on any amendment to the Constitution, initiated measure, or referred law submitted to the electors for approval. The secretary of state shall compile the public information by printing a statement in support of the amendment to the Constitution, initiated measure, or referred law written by its proponents, if any can be identified, and a statement against the amendment to the Constitution, initiated measure, or referred law written by its opponents, if any can be identified. No statement written by a proponent, or an opponent may exceed three hundred words in length. The secretary of state is not responsible for the contents, objectivity, or accuracy of the statements written by the proponents and opponents. The pamphlet shall also include the attorney general's title, explanation, and a recitation of the effect of a "Yes" or "No" vote as written pursuant to § 12-13-9 or 12-13-25.1; number of pages and sections in the proposed or referred language; and, if applicable, a fiscal note.

Please feel free to photocopy and distribute this pamphlet. You may also bring the pamphlet with you to vote at your polling place.

Monae L. Johnson

Monae L. Johnson
Secretary of State

Rachel Soulek, Director Division of Elections
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Constitutional amendments and initiated and referred measures approved by majority vote will become effective on the first day of July after the completion of the official canvass by the State Canvassing Board. (SDCL 2-1-12)

30,000 copies of this publication were printed by the Office of the Secretary of State at a cost of \$0.28 each.

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2024 Ballot Question Contact Information	
PRO	CON
Constitutional Amendment E - An amendment to the Constitution of the State of South Dakota, updating references to certain officeholders and persons.	
Erin Tobin 921 E. 5th St., Winner, SD 57580 Erin@erintobinforsd.com	Liz May 20261 BIA 2, Kyle, SD 57552 Liz.May@sdlegislature.gov
Constitutional Amendment F - An amendment to the Constitution of the State of South Dakota, authorizing the state to impose work requirements on certain individuals who are eligible for expanded Medicaid.	
Representative Tony Venhuizen District 13, Sioux Falls, SD tonyvenhuizen@gmail.com	Sarah Graves Nursing Student and Volunteer for American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network Pierre, SD
Constitutional Amendment G - An initiated amendment establishing a right to abortion in the State Constitution.	
Rick Weiland PO Box 2063, Sioux Falls, SD 57105 Phone: 605.610.8146 info@dakotans4health.com	Leslie Unruh and Jon Hansen Co-Chairs of Life Defense Fund info@lifedefensefund.com
Constitutional Amendment H - An amendment to the South Dakota Constitution establishing Top Two Primary Elections.	
Joe Kirby 350 S Main Ave #701, Sioux Falls, SD 57104 info@sdopenprimaries.org sdopenprimaries.org	John Wiik chairman@sdgop.com
Initiated Measure 28 - An initiated measure prohibiting taxes on anything sold for human consumption.	
Rick Weiland PO Box 2063, Sioux Falls, SD 57105 Phone: 605.610.8146 info@dakotans4health.com	Nathan Sanderson 320 E Capitol Ave., Pierre, SD 57501 nosdincometax.com
Initiated Measure 29 - An initiated measure legalizing the recreational use, possession, and distribution of marijuana.	
Matthew Schweich 27058 S Southeastern Avenue Phone: 605.610.8396 matt@southdakotamarijuana.org	Jim Kinyon, President Protecting South Dakota Kids, Inc. 2520 6th Street, Rapid City, SD 57701 Phone: 605.431.3164 jim.kinyon7@gmail.com
Referred Law 21 - Provide new statutory requirements for regulating linear transmission facilities to allow counties to impose a surcharge on certain pipeline companies and to establish a landowner Bill of Rights.	
Walt Bones Farmer and impacted landowner 46036 268th St., Chancellor, SD 57015	Jim Eschenbaum SD PRLCA Chairman eschfarm@yahoo.com

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Constitutional Amendment E

Title: An Amendment to the South Dakota Constitution Updating Gender References for Certain Officeholders and Persons.

Attorney General Explanation: The South Dakota Constitution became effective upon the State joining the United States in 1889. The generic male pronouns he, his, and him are used in the text of the State Constitution to reference certain officeholders or individuals.

This amendment changes the text of the State Constitution to remove the use of generic male pronouns when referencing certain officeholders or individuals. For example, when referencing the Governor, instead of saying "he shall be commander-in-chief of the armed forces of the state," the text will be changed to read "the Governor shall be commander-in-chief of the armed forces of the state." The amendment makes similar changes to other references to the Governor, as well as to references to other officeholders including Lieutenant Governor, Supreme Court Justices, and Circuit Court Judges. The amendment also makes similar changes to references in the Constitution to general classes of people such as persons, electors, and public officers.

Vote "Yes" to adopt the amendment.

Vote "No" to leave the Constitution as it is.

The text of this constitutional amendment is 11 pages long with 25 sections.

Pro – Constitutional Amendment E	Con – Constitutional Amendment E
<p>Amendment E will rightfully update the language within our State Constitution to reflect our elected and appointed officials pertaining to the office in which they hold.</p> <p>South Dakota has a long history of strong female representation in all three branches of government, and the Constitution should accurately reflect these esteemed members of our government.</p> <p>As a mother of a little girl in South Dakota, I want all young women to realize that they can grow up to do anything they set their mind to, and they too have potential to lead our State in their profession and/or politics.</p> <p>I urge the South Dakota voters to vote "yes" for this amendment. Such a vote would be a show of respect for our state's past, present, and future female leaders!</p> <p>Erin Tobin, State Senator, District 21</p>	<p>Amendment E is an unnecessary change to language in our South Dakota Constitution.</p> <p>The reference to "he" in our Constitution is simply a singular pronoun. The historic use of generic male pronouns in our constitution is proper style and form and clearly does not exclude or hinder women from holding public office.</p> <p>While this seems like a minor change now, opening up the constitution in order to correct pronouns will not accomplish anything substantive, but will cost taxpayer dollars to reprint materials that are already effective in their current form.</p> <p>Liz May, State Representative, District 27</p>

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Constitutional Amendment F

Title: An Amendment to the South Dakota Constitution Authorizing the State to Impose a Work Requirement on Individuals Eligible for Expanded Medicaid Benefits.

Attorney General Explanation: The Medicaid program is funded by the State and the federal government to provide medical coverage for certain low-income people who qualify for the program. In 2022, the voters approved a Constitutional provision that expanded Medicaid eligibility for any person over age 18 and under 65 whose income is at or below 133% of the federal poverty level, plus 5% of the federal poverty level for the applicable family size.

This constitutional amendment authorizes the State to impose work requirements on any person eligible to receive benefits under the expanded Medicaid program, except for those persons who are physically or mentally disabled. The amendment does not identify any specific work requirement that may be imposed on those receiving expanded Medicaid benefits. Any work requirement proposed by the State must be approved by the federal government prior to implementation.

Vote “Yes” to adopt the amendment.

Vote “No” to leave the Constitution as it is.

The text of this constitutional amendment is two pages long with two sections.

Pro – Constitutional Amendment F	Con – Constitutional Amendment F
<p>Amendment F is based on the idea that social welfare programs are a hand-up for people facing tough times but should not be a way of life. Vote YES if you agree.</p> <p>South Dakota has enacted Medicaid expansion, which extends Medicaid health coverage to adults below a certain income who are 18 to 65 years old and not disabled.</p> <p>Amendment F would allow South Dakota to consider a work requirement for working-age, able-bodied adults who want to enroll in Medicaid expansion. Currently, we can’t encourage these folks to seek work or training to get back on their feet, rather than stay on government programs for the long-term.</p> <p>By voting YES, we can fix the current language, which prohibits South Dakota from even considering a work requirement.</p> <p>Our welfare programs should care for those who can’t care for themselves – the elderly, the young, and the disabled. Amendment F allows the state to require able-bodied, working-aged people who enroll in Medicaid to work or go to school, to support themselves and their families.</p> <p>Our state already does this in other social programs, and we know how to do it.</p> <p>If Amendment F passes, a work requirement will still require approval from the federal government and from the state legislature. This will allow for reasonable exceptions to the work requirement, like for parents of young children, students, those with serious health issues, or those looking for work.</p> <p>Voting YES for Amendment F simply creates this option for South Dakota. It doesn’t make sense that our state constitution prohibits our state from ever considering a work requirement.</p> <p>South Dakotans are hard-working people, and we believe in the value of work. Medicaid expansion, like all social programs, should be a pathway to a better future for those who receive it.</p> <p>Vote YES on Amendment F.</p> <p>Tony Venhuizen, State Representative, District 13</p>	<p>Voters approved Medicaid expansion to provide health coverage to thousands of South Dakotans and Amendment F will take away that health coverage for some of those residents.</p> <p>What Medicaid expansion means for people in the gap – those with low incomes who can't get insurance through their jobs, and who can't afford insurance on their own because the costs are sky-high-- is that they are no longer forced to choose between medical care or rent, food, childcare, and other necessities. It also means that if they are too sick to work, they do not automatically lose access to care.</p> <p>I learned how easily life gets turned upside down by a lack of coverage when I was diagnosed with cancer while building a small business. I didn’t have insurance and it was a life-changing, scary experience nobody should have to endure.</p> <p>If Amendment F is approved, South Dakotans who are employed and doing all they can to support themselves, and their families, will lose healthcare coverage. We know from other states that have taken similar approaches that some will simply get lost in a blizzard of paperwork, putting government bureaucrats between patients and their doctor. Others will have to stop working because they get sick, risking losing coverage when they need it most.</p> <p>Working full time while receiving cancer treatment drained me. I maxed out my sick time, struggled to get through the workday and was too fatigued at the end of the day to care for my daughter. Fighting cancer is hard work. The thought of having to report my condition to government bureaucrats every month just to keep my health insurance and continue my treatment is terrifying. Medicaid needs to stay in place as it was approved by the voters.</p> <p>Support working South Dakotans and Vote No on Amendment F.</p> <p>Sarah Graves, Nursing Student and Volunteer with the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network</p>

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Constitutional Amendment G

Title: An Initiated Amendment Establishing a Right to Abortion in the State Constitution.

Attorney General Explanation: This initiated amendment establishes a constitutional right to an abortion and provides a legal framework for the regulation of abortion. This framework would override existing laws and regulations concerning abortion.

The amendment establishes that during the first trimester a pregnant woman's decision to obtain an abortion may not be regulated nor may regulations be imposed on the carrying out of an abortion.

In the second trimester, the amendment allows the regulation of a pregnant woman's abortion decision, and the regulation of carrying out an abortion. Any regulation of a pregnant woman's abortion decision, or of an abortion, during the second trimester must be reasonably related to the physical health of the pregnant woman.

In the third trimester, the amendment allows the regulation or prohibition of abortion except in those cases where the abortion is necessary to preserve the life or health of the pregnant woman. Whether an abortion is necessary during the third trimester must be determined by the pregnant woman's physician according to the physician's medical judgment.

Judicial clarification of the amendment may be necessary. The Legislature cannot alter the provisions of a constitutional amendment.

Vote "Yes" to adopt the amendment.
Vote "No" to leave the Constitution as it is.

The text of this constitutional amendment is two pages long containing one section.

Pro – Constitutional Amendment G	Con – Constitutional Amendment G
<p>Politicians in Pierre have decreed that South Dakota women and girls who are raped must carry to term, thrown miscarriage care into utter confusion, and limited available treatment of extreme pregnancy complications. They need to butt out. Let women and families live their lives. Let doctors and nurses practice their professions. Let freedom ring. That is what Amendment G will do.</p> <p>Americans fought for freedom nearly 250 years ago and have been defending it ever since. No one values freedom more than South Dakotans. But two years ago, freedoms of women across America were lost when the right to abortion health care that had existed for 50 years was suddenly taken away by the U.S. Supreme Court.</p> <p>Amendment G, the "Freedom Amendment," would restore those rights here. Amendment G simply writes into our state Constitution the limited reproductive freedoms for women that until 2022 were recognized in the U.S. Constitution. Wording of Amendment G intentionally mirrors the wording of <i>Roe v. Wade</i>, the decision that had guaranteed women those freedoms. Tune out the radical "right to life" political noise and just read Amendment G itself and the Attorney General's explanation of it. Both are very short!</p> <p>Like most Constitutional provisions, Amendment G will occasionally require judicial clarification, every one of which will be made by South Dakota judges. The dire predictions of unthinkable outcomes that opponents claim will occur under Amendment G are deceitful scare tactics that insult South Dakota's judiciary and defy voters' common sense. None of their awful scenarios played out in 50 years under <i>Roe v. Wade</i> as interpreted by Federal Courts. To say the same language in Amendment G would be interpreted by South Dakota courts in some radical "pro-abortion" way is absurd. Support Amendment G.</p> <p>Nancy Turbak Berry, Chair for South Dakotas for the Freedom Amendment</p>	<p>With Constitutional Abortion Amendment G, the devil is in the details. The wording of Amendment G is unclear and vague. So, to clear up the confusion, here's the truth about what Amendment G would do:</p> <p>Abortion Amendment G would impose California and New York style abortion laws into our State Constitution. This is not a "moderate" or "middle-of-the-road" proposal.</p> <p>A yes vote for Amendment G <i>approves late-term abortion even after a baby is viable and can survive outside her mother's womb.</i> Most people oppose late term abortion up to birth. <u>Amendment G goes too far.</u></p> <p>A yes vote for Amendment G <i>takes away parents' rights</i> to know when their teenage daughter is undergoing an abortion procedure. This means parents wouldn't even be informed if their teenage daughter was being coerced into having an abortion. Don't parents deserve the right to know when their daughter is undergoing a risky medical procedure? <u>Amendment G takes parents' rights away.</u></p> <p>Because Amendment G was written to benefit the for-profit abortion industry, Amendment G dangerously deregulates the abortion industry. Currently, an abortion can only be done by a licensed doctor in a safe and clean setting. But a yes vote for Amendment G <i>prohibits South Dakota legal protections for the physical and mental health of mothers for most abortions.</i> Abortions can have dangerous and deadly side effects. That's why numerous South Dakota medical professionals agree: by subjecting women to unsafe, unregulated abortions, <u>Amendment G is dangerous for South Dakota women.</u></p> <p>Voting NO on Amendment G prohibits late-term (up to 9 month) abortions.</p> <p>Voting NO on Amendment G allows loving parents to assist their daughter in a time of need.</p> <p>Voting NO on Amendment G protects mothers from unsafe, unregulated abortions.</p> <p>Protect babies and mothers.</p> <p>Vote NO on Amendment G.</p> <p>Leslie Unruh, Co-Chair of Life Defense Fund Jon Hansen, Co-Chair of Life Defense Fund</p>

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Constitutional Amendment H

Title: An Amendment to the South Dakota Constitution Establishing Top-Two Primary Elections.

Attorney General Explanation: Currently, to appear on the general election ballot, major party candidates for the following offices must participate in a partisan primary election: Governor, State Legislature, U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, and elected county offices. Only members of the candidate’s party may vote for that candidate unless that party has opened the primary to voters not affiliated with the party.

Minor party candidates may be chosen by primary or party convention.

Unaffiliated candidates (independents) are only required to file nominating petitions to appear on the general election ballot.

For the listed offices, this amendment requires one primary election wherein all candidates run against each other in their respective races, including major and minor party and unaffiliated candidates. A candidate may list any party next to their name on the ballot regardless of party affiliation or registration. All voters may vote for any candidate. The two candidates receiving the most votes advance to the general election. If there is more than one candidate to be elected to an office, the number of candidates advancing to the general election is twice the number to be elected.

Primary elections may be held for other offices.

The amendment may be challenged on constitutional grounds.

Fiscal Note: Open primaries would require printing additional ballots at a cost of \$0.47 per ballot. The additional cost statewide to counties would currently be approximately \$23,667 for each primary election. The share of the total cost for each county will vary. There is no expected cost to state government.

Vote “Yes” to adopt the amendment.

Vote “No” to leave the Constitution as it is.

The text of this constitutional amendment is two pages long containing one section.

Pro – Constitutional Amendment H	Con – Constitutional Amendment H
<p>Vote YES on Amendment H to make sure every South Dakota voter has a voice in who leads our state, taking power from party bosses and returning it to the voters.</p> <p>Amendment H creates one “South Dakota Primary.” All candidates would be on a single primary ballot, all voters would receive that ballot and the top two vote-getters would advance to the general election. Most importantly, all voters would get to vote!</p> <p>Currently, 150,000 independent or unaffiliated voters in South Dakota are excluded from taxpayer-funded primary elections. Amendment H ensures that everyone has a meaningful voice in who leads our state by letting all voters vote in the primary elections.</p> <p>Our closed primary system isn’t working anymore. Only 17% of South Dakota’s voters participated in last June’s primary election, so it’s no surprise that politicians aren’t listening to voters: they are only accountable to powerful interests who dominate the primaries. Amendment H would boost turnout and competitive elections, so politicians are more likely to act on items which have broad public support.</p> <p>Bottom line: Amendment H would shift power from party bosses back to the voters. It would fix an unfair system that silences the voices of 150,000 South Dakota independent voters. It would increase voter participation in elections and make our system fairer. And it would rationalize our politics and ensure elected officials focus on what’s best for all South Dakotans.</p> <p>Vote YES on Amendment H to let all voter’s vote!</p> <p>Joe Kirby, Republican and Chairman of South Dakota Open Primaries, De Knudson, Republican and Former Sioux Falls City Councilor Drey Samuelson, Former Chief of Staff to U.S. Senator Tim Johnson</p>	<p>Political parties are foundational elements of self-government. Parties play a crucial role in every functional self-government around the world. They have played a critical role in the history of our country and our state. Parties of all kinds and in all places examine government and society, make choices on governmental policy, and give confidence to voters that office holders will act along those precepts. For example, the abolition of slavery was the founding principle of the Republican Party. Candidates and office holders were able to align alongside that ideal, and give voters confidence that Republican candidates were indeed anti-slavery. Parties choosing platforms, followed by primaries where candidates for the ballot are chosen by members who support those ideals is a founding principle of modern political debate and of self-government. Open primaries might well destroy the effectiveness of our system of government by allowing outsiders to participate in selecting candidates to run for office. This idea may well substantially weaken the ability of voters to choose office holders who truly represent their values and ideals. Both major parties in our state oppose Amendment H. You should too.</p> <p>John Wiik, SDGOP</p>

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Initiated Measure 28

Title: An Initiated Measure Prohibiting Taxes on Anything Sold for Human Consumption.

Attorney General Explanation: Currently, the State collects tax on the sale or use of certain goods, including foods and drinks. Many municipalities also collect these taxes.

This initiated measure prohibits the State from collecting sales or use tax on anything sold for human consumption. The measure eliminates these sources of revenue for the State.

Human consumption is not defined by state law. However, its common definition includes more than foods and drinks.

The measure does not prohibit the collection of sales or use tax on alcoholic beverages or prepared food. Prepared food is defined by law to include food that is sold heated or with utensils.

The measure may affect the State's obligations under the tobacco master settlement agreement and the streamlined sales tax agreement. The master settlement agreement resulted from multi-state lawsuits against cigarette manufacturers for the public health effects of smoking. South Dakota's annual share of the master settlement agreement is approximately \$20 million. The streamlined sales tax agreement is a multistate program designed to simplify the collection of sales and use tax for companies selling in multiple jurisdictions.

Judicial or legislative clarification of the measure will be necessary.

Fiscal Note: Beginning July 1, 2025, the State could see a reduction in sales tax revenues of \$123.9 million annually from no longer taxing the sale of anything sold for human consumption, except alcoholic beverages and prepared food. Municipalities could continue to tax anything sold for human consumption.

Vote "Yes" to adopt the initiated measure.

Vote "No" to leave South Dakota law as it is.

The text of this initiated measure is two pages long containing one section.

Pro – Initiated Measure 28	Con – Initiated Measure 28
<p>According to Feeding South Dakota, the state's largest hunger relief organization, 106,000 South Dakotans, including 1 in 6 children, are food insecure, meaning they don't know where their next meal is coming from.</p> <p>South Dakota and Mississippi are the only states that still tax groceries at the full allowable state rate. Because families with very modest incomes must spend up to 30% of their total household income on food, whereas more affluent families need spend only 7% of theirs, this means that ordinary families are spending 400% more of their total income on food than are the wealthy. That is not fair. It is time for South Dakota to let Mississippi be the only state so unfair as this.</p> <p>For 20 years the state legislature has considered removing this unfair tax, but it has failed to act. Even Governor Kristi Noem, who made repealing the sales tax on groceries a key promise in her 2022 re-election campaign, could not get this done. Clearly we the voters need to do what politicians more beholden to their donors than to us have failed to do.</p> <p>And remember, this amendment specifically preserves local governments' taxing authority, so do not be misled by false claims that it will hamper local officials or result in onerous new taxes with zero chance of being enacted. These assertions are politician talk designed to mislead and scare voters into retaining a tax the politicians' rich donors love, but which treats the rest of us unfairly.</p> <p>Recent polling by South Dakota News Watch shows that 66% of South Dakotans support repealing the state's grocery tax. When the legislature fails to act, it is time for the people to decide. Let's make our voices heard and end this unfair tax.</p> <p>Rick Weiland, Co-Founder Dakotans for Health</p>	<p>IM-28 would lead to irresponsible funding cuts to essential government functions or new tax increases. It would eliminate sales taxes on MANY items other than food, cutting at least \$176 million.</p> <p>IM-28 would prohibit taxes on <u>anything sold for human consumption</u>, except alcohol and prepared food. This bad wording would eliminate taxes on tobacco (annual loss of \$65 million), vaping products, CBD, toothpaste, aspirin, toilet paper, and many other products.</p> <p>If IM-28 passes, it would have the absurd result where sales taxes would remain on a rotisserie chicken, but not a pack of cigarettes.</p> <p>IM-28 would prevent cities and towns from collecting sales taxes on consumable items, leaving a huge hole in local budgets.</p> <p>State law says cities and towns can charge a sales tax only if it "conforms in all respects to the state tax on such items with the exception of the rate."</p> <p>This means that cities and towns can only tax the same items as the state – and if the state cannot tax "anything for human consumption," neither than a city or town. IM-28 will eliminate funding for our communities and require cuts for law enforcement, roads, pools, and parks.</p> <p>IM-28 will also reduce funding for Tribal governments via sales tax compacts with the state.</p> <p>The bad wording in IM-28 is setting us up for a state income tax, or it was drafted wrong. Either way, it's bad for South Dakota.</p> <p>IM-28 will cut at least \$176 million each year and lead to significant cuts to education, healthcare, and state employees; or it sets us up for an income tax to fund needed services.</p> <p>Vote no on IM-28.</p> <p>Nathan Sanderson, Executive Director SD Retailers Association, President Coalition for Responsible Taxation, Treasurer South Dakota Against a State Income Tax</p>

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Initiated Measure 29

Title: An Initiated Measure Legalizing the Recreational Use, Possession, and Distribution of Marijuana.

Attorney General Explanation: This initiated measure allows individuals 21 years of age or older to possess, grow, ingest, and distribute marijuana or marijuana paraphernalia. Individuals may possess up to two ounces of marijuana in a form other than marijuana concentrate or other marijuana products. Individuals may possess up to six marijuana plants with no more than twelve plants per household. The measure also places limits on the possession of other forms of marijuana and marijuana products.

Under the measure, the possession, ingestion, and distribution of marijuana and marijuana paraphernalia remains illegal for individuals under the age of 21. Driving under the influence of marijuana remains illegal.

The measure restricts where individuals may possess or consume marijuana, such as schools or where tobacco is prohibited.

The measure allows employers to restrict an employee's use of marijuana. Property owners may also regulate the use of marijuana on their property.

The measure does not affect State laws dealing with hemp. It also does not change laws concerning the State's medical marijuana program.

The measure legalizes marijuana-derived substances considered felony controlled substances under State law. Marijuana remains illegal under federal law.

Judicial or legislative clarification of this measure may be necessary.

Fiscal Note: The state and municipalities would collect minimal additional sales tax revenue, as the measure would not decriminalize the sale of cannabis but would decriminalize the sale of cannabis accessories. Counties could see incarceration expenses reduced by \$581,556 every year.

Vote "Yes" to adopt the initiated measure.

Vote "No" to leave South Dakota law as it is.

The text of this initiated measure is two pages long containing four sections.

Pro – Initiated Measure 29	Con – Initiated Measure 29
<p>IM 29 is a simple, common-sense policy that would legalize cannabis for adults 21 and over in South Dakota. By voting yes, you can protect personal freedom, improve public health and safety, and restore the will of the people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> WILL improve public health and safety. Instead of wasting time and resources on arresting people for cannabis possession, law enforcement can focus on fighting real crime in our communities. At the same time, we can replace the illicit market with licensed businesses selling products that are tested for safety. WILL strengthen the economy and generate new tax revenue: Cannabis businesses will create new jobs for South Dakotans, including farmers, while also providing new opportunities for a range of existing small businesses. Legalization will also reduce spending on incarceration and generate millions of dollars in new tax revenue for the state every year. WILL protect medical cannabis patients from arrest: For many seriously ill people, including those suffering from cancer, epilepsy, and MS, cannabis is the only medicine that can relieve their pain without debilitating side effects. Even though our state has established a medical cannabis program, access is still too difficult and too expensive for many South Dakotans. WILL withstand legal challenge: The measure is simpler and shorter than previous cannabis initiatives and designed to withstand any legal challenge. WILL NOT increase teen drug use: Measure 29 only legalizes cannabis for adults 21 or older. Studies analyzing tens of thousands of high school students in Colorado and Washington show that teen cannabis use has not increased since those states legalized cannabis for adults in 2012. WILL NOT increase crime rates: Analysis from states that have legalized cannabis has found that the policy does not increase crime rates. <p>Matthew Schweich, Executive Director for South Dakotans for Better Marijuana Laws and Quincy Hanzen, Deputy Director for South Dakotans for Better Marijuana Laws</p>	<p>IM 29 opens the door for increased crime, suicide rates, traffic fatalities, workplace injuries, reduction in workforce, mental health problems and youth use. This measure would harm South Dakota children, families, communities. IM29 will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Harm children: If a drug is legal, children think it is safe and will try it. Marijuana is not safe! A research report on child abuse stated, "Marijuana is the substance most identified as actively used by the perpetrator in child abuse and neglect related fatalities." *Increased addiction rates: Research shows that marijuana is a highly addictive gateway drug that increases abuse of opioids, fentanyl, alcohol, meth and other illicit drugs. *Increased costs to communities: With dramatic increases in emergency room visits, crime, mental health effects and traffic accidents, insurance rates and taxes increase. For every \$1 in revenue, Colorado spends \$4.50 in countering the damaging impact of legalization. *Increase in crime rates: Statistics show that 50% of men and 30% of women arrested for a crime test positive for marijuana. Read our news! More violent crime in South Dakota. *Fuels cartel presence and the black market: Colorado, Oregon, California, Oklahoma, Kentucky, and Washington are all experiencing this reality. The remoteness of parts of our states and fast growth in our cities will make it harder for law enforcement to protect you, your children and your property from the detrimental effects legalization will bring to your community. *Increases mental health and physical health problems: Over 20,000 peer-reviewed articles link marijuana to mental health issues. AMA has linked it to heart and stroke in adults. South Dakota already has laws that allow people to use marijuana products for health reasons. We cannot sacrifice the health and safety of our children and our communities for this addiction-for-profit industry, leaving South Dakotans to pay the price. <p>VOTE NO ON IM29!</p> <p>Jim Kinyon, President, Protecting South Dakota Kids Rhonda Milstead, Executive Director, Protecting South Dakota Kids Travis Ismay, Concerned Citizens of South Dakota Dr. Forrest Brady, MD and Dr. April A. Anderson, LPC, EdD</p>

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Referred Law 21

Title: A Referred Act to Provide New Statutory Requirements for Regulating Linear Transmission Facilities, to Allow Counties to Impose a Surcharge on Certain Pipeline Companies, and to Establish a Landowner Bill of Rights

Attorney General Explanation: The Act authorizes counties to impose, for any tax year in which the pipeline operator receives a tax credit, a \$1.00 per foot surcharge on carbon dioxide pipelines. Revenue from the surcharge must be distributed as tax relief to each property owner in the county where the pipeline is installed. Any remaining revenue can be allocated at each county's discretion. No other fee may be imposed except property taxes, or fees associated with road agreements.

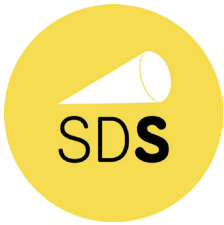
The Act also imposes certain requirements on carbon dioxide pipelines: pipelines must be installed to a minimum depth; each pipeline operator is responsible for damages to drain tile, and to the surface owner, caused by the pipeline; each operator is also responsible for leaks or failures of the pipeline; and any land agent acting on behalf of the pipeline must be a pipeline employee, State resident, or State licensed real estate agent. The Act also includes requirements that carbon pipeline easements be in writing, and only enforceable for a specified period of time; pipeline operators must initiate business operations within five years of the easement; and each easement is void after five years of nonuse.

Vote "Yes" to allow the Act of the Legislature to become law.

Vote "No" to reject the Act of the Legislature.

The text of this referred law is two pages long containing one section.

Pro – Referred Law 21	Con – Referred Law 21
<p>VOTE YES TO KEEP THE LANDOWNER BILL OF RIGHTS. We need Referred Law 21 to protect landowners, hold pipelines, accountable, deliver property tax relief, support our agriculture economy, and keep taxes low for all South Dakotans. If this ethanol value-enhancing pipeline is going to get built in South Dakota, it needs to be on fair terms to our farmers and ranchers. We need Referred Law 21.</p> <p>It includes the following benefits for landowners and all South Dakotans:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tax Relief for Taxpayers/Revenue for Counties: In addition to millions in annual property taxes, 21 forces the pipeline to pay an additional dollar per year per linear foot of pipeline – half of which goes to the county and half to the landowner. 2. Leak Liability: Ensures pipelines pay for any damage caused by leaks. 3. Indemnity for Landowners: Requires carbon pipeline to indemnify landowners for liability. 4. Minimum Burial Depth: Requires carbon pipeline to be buried at least 4 ft deep, exceeding federal regulations of 3 ft. 5. Disclosure of Dispersion Models: Requires carbon pipelines to release the plume studies, so people know what happens if there is a leak. 6. Lifetime Drain Tile Repairs: Requires carbon pipelines to repair any damage to drain tile. 7. Agricultural Impact Mitigation: Requires carbon pipelines to file an ag impact mitigation plan. 8. Information Disclosure: Requires carbon pipelines to disclose landowner rights and protections in their documents. <p>These are common sense laws that make our agricultural heritage more secure. Our state’s ethanol industry needs carbon pipelines to access new markets and enable the production of Sustainable Aviation Fuel that will add more value to the corn we grow.</p> <p>Please vote Yes.</p> <p>Walt Bones, farmer and impacted landowner Parker, South Dakota</p>	<p>Referred Law 21 is a special law that advantages private, for-profit, carbon dioxide pipeline companies and their foreign investors at the expense of South Dakotans.</p> <p>Heavily lobbied by pipeline companies and related industries, Referred Law 21 was amended multiple times in the bargaining process and given the misleading name “Landowner Bill of Rights”. Misleading, because no additional rights beyond those enumerated in the Constitution are endowed by this law. The ‘rights’ described are mainly provisions already guaranteed in codified law and other 2024 legislation.</p> <p>Referred Law 21 exempts “pipelines for the transmission of carbon dioxide” from property taxation and shields them from future tax increases and additional fees. (Sections 1 and 7)</p> <p>Pipeline companies and other “transmission facilities” need only obtain a construction permit from the three Public Utilities Commissioners in Pierre to be exempted from all local zoning rules and regulations that other companies doing business in those jurisdictions must follow, including setbacks and other safety protections. (Section 6)</p> <p>The meager one-dollar-per-foot surcharge pipeline companies pay to the counties is a bargain for the ability to bypass local governance. The fifty-cent portion that is shared among affected landowners is a small comfort if land was taken without consent. Section 2 is unclear, so this could be a one-time payment.</p> <p>Referred Law 21 was passed to uniquely benefit the carbon pipeline industry. It encompasses three separate subjects in the title and includes subjects not stated in the title. Article III of the South Dakota Constitution forbids special laws and multiple subjects, so a constitutional challenge is likely.</p> <p>“Economic Development” should never be blindly pursued at the expense of individual property rights and equal treatment under the law.</p> <p>The Legislature got it wrong. South Dakota may be open for business, but we are not for sale.</p> <p>VOTE NO on Referred Law 21</p> <p>Jim Eschenbaum, SD PRLCA Chairman</p>



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

35 church leaders endorse South Dakota abortion-rights ballot measure

BY: SEARCHLIGHT STAFF - SEPTEMBER 17, 2024 5:22 PM

A coalition of Christian clergy members announced support Tuesday for a ballot measure that would establish the right to an abortion in the South Dakota constitution.

The 35 faith leaders are from five Christian denominations — the United Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church USA, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Episcopal Church and the United Church of Christ.

“Our pastoral care experiences have taught us that complicated health care decisions are best left to the patient in consultation with families and health care providers, and as part of faith conversations,” the group wrote. “This should happen without interference from politicians or the courts.”

On the other side of the debate, the South Dakota Catholic Conference has taken a stance against the ballot measure and is encouraging Catholics to vote no.

Voters will decide on the constitutional amendment in the Nov. 5 general election, with early and absentee voting beginning Friday.

After the U.S. Supreme Court’s 2022 decision that overturned Roe v. Wade, a trigger law that the South Dakota Legislature had adopted in 2005 immediately banned abortions in the state except when necessary to “preserve the life of the pregnant female.”

The proposed amendment would prohibit regulation of abortion during the first trimester. In the second trimester, regulations would be allowed if they are reasonably related to the pregnant woman’s physical health. During the third trimester, abortion could be regulated or prohibited, except when necessary to preserve the life or health of the woman, as determined by her physician’s medical judgment.

Meanwhile, a lawsuit from a group called Life Defense Fund that aims to invalidate the ballot measure is scheduled for trial next week. The group alleges various legal infractions by the petition circulators who gathered signatures to place the measure on the ballot.



A Sioux Falls resident votes in the city and school board election at Southern Hills United Methodist Church on April 9, 2024. (Makenzie Huber/South Dakota Searchlight)

Aberdeen man becomes first charged under new law banning computer-generated child porn

BY: JOHN HULT - SEPTEMBER 17, 2024 1:25 PM

A 56-year-old Aberdeen man has become the first person charged under a new South Dakota law that bans computer-generated child pornography.

William Webster Bragg was indicted by a Brown County grand jury on one count of distributing child pornography and six counts of child pornography possession for "crimes that occurred on or about Aug. 13, 2024," according to a news release from Attorney General Marty Jackley.

If Bragg is convicted, the distribution charge is punishable by up to 15 years in prison; each possession charge carries a sentence of up to 10 years.

Jackley argued last winter for a bill that would criminalize the possession of both computer-generated child porn and sexually explicit "deepfakes," which are images of real people manipulated into pornography by computer programs.

His bill was later folded into a broader update to the state's child pornography laws, which became law on July 1. Before the law's passage, cases involving possession of computer-generated child porn were only prosecuted in federal court, where several cases have appeared over the past few years under a statute rarely used in the state until 2022. The Bragg case, like the federal cases, was investigated by a federal, state and local law enforcement partnership called the Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force.

"This case demonstrates why the Legislature needed to, and did, act to protect children," Jackley said in a news release. "Computer-generated child pornography, including those images and videos created using artificial intelligence, has become an increasing concern nationwide and in South Dakota."

Bragg is free on bond and is being monitored by GPS through the 24/7 sobriety program, according to court records. He is set to appear in court on Oct. 15.

His bond conditions also specify that he is only to leave his house for court, is to have no contact with children and cannot use alcohol or marijuana.

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.



The Brown County Courthouse is located in Aberdeen and is connected to other county offices, such as the Auditor's Office and the Brown County Jail. (Makenzie Huber/

South Dakota Searchlight)

COMMENTARY

EPA slow to suspend toxic herbicide tied to lifelong health issues DCPA is now off the market. But why did the regulating federal agency take so long to act?

by Dave Dickey, Investigate Midwest.jpeg

Imagine an agricultural chemical so vial, so poisonous, so unsafe to human health that even the pesticide-friendly and herbicide-happy Environmental Protection Agency eventually couldn't look the other way.

That chemical is dimethyl tetrachloro-terephthalate, also known as DCPA, sold under the brand name Dacthal. The herbicide is widely used on broccoli, cabbage, brussels sprouts and onion crops in the U.S.

Just one company manufactures DCPA, AMVAC Chemical Corporation. But not anymore after AMVAC and EPA couldn't agree on a new product warning label to address what the federal agency calls "an imminent hazard" in its emergency order to suspend registration:

"...current uses of DCPA may expose pregnant individuals to levels of the pesticide sufficient to cause adverse thyroid effects — with attendant lifelong health problems — in the fetuses of those individuals. There are still risk concerns even when taking into consideration the subsequent December 2023 product cancellations, the July 2023 voluntary use cancellation requests, and the registrant's voluntary cessation of the sale and distribution of DCPA."

The effects on fetuses can include low birth weight, impaired brain development, decreased bone deposition and Intelligence Quotient, and impaired motor skills.

EPA's emergency order is all encompassing:

"Effective immediately, no person in any state may distribute, sell, offer for sale, hold for sale, ship, deliver for shipment, or receive and (having so received) deliver or offer to deliver to any person any pesticide product containing DCPA. Additionally, in accordance with FIFRA section 6(a)(1), EPA has elected not to permit the continued use of existing stocks, consistent with its policies applicable to cancellations where the Agency has identified significant risk concerns."

We shouldn't be throwing EPA flowers even though it's the first time the agency has used an emergency order since banning DDT more than four decades ago.

Why? Because EPA failed to apply balanced science to prior registrations of DCPA and treated AMVAC with kid gloves.

Here's the story.

DCPA was first registered in 1958 under the 1947 Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act. Responsibility for administering FIFRA moved from USDA to the newly created EPA in 1970, and, in 1972, the act was amended adding new environmental and health standards as well as requiring re-registration



The Environmental Protection Agency headquarters in Washington, D.C. (Photo from epa.gov)

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of older pesticides.

But it wasn't until 1988 that President Ronald Reagan signed amendments to the FIFRA that clarified pesticide and herbicide re-registration of products first registered before 1984 — including DCPA.

Even so, it was another seven years before EPA re-registered DCPA in 1995 for more than 80 products primarily used to control weeds on ornamental turf and plants, strawberries, seeded and transplanted vegetables, cotton, and field beans. As an aside, the re-registration did not include the original turf application because EPA wasn't sure if DCPA could cause groundwater contamination as well as the possibility of "carcinogenic risk to children playing on lawns."

But the dangers of DCPA were quickly coming into focus. In 1999, EPA found DCPA caused thyroid tumors in female and male rats and mice as well as liver tumors in mice and concluded:

"Further experimental work is needed to help determine modes of action of pesticides. More than one mode of action may apply; methods are available to discern each of them. Future studies submitted to the EPA are expected to comply with EPA science policy. Given the present assessment of pesticides as well as an evaluation of other chemicals, it is apparent that antithyroid activity is a common mode of thyroid carcinogenic action in rodents."

While EPA was of the mind that additional information was necessary, it wasn't until 2013 that it finally got around to demanding AMVAC provide more information on the herbicide. More than a decade after EPA's own toxicological study, EPA gave AMVAC until January 2016 to submit roughly 20 studies on DCPA, including one examining thyroid hormone impacts.

But the chemical company dragged its feet on numerous reports and stonewalled the agency on others. EPA also found some studies insufficient to answer its concerns. The thyroid hormone study didn't show up on EPA's doorstep until August 2022 — more than six years after the deadline.

EPA could have and should have played hardball with AMVAC. Just how ridiculous was EPA oversight? In June 2022, EPA lead environmental protection specialist Jill Bloom filed a written court statement testifying about AMVAC's radio silence:

"AMVAC's actions as to the [data call-in] are abnormally dilatory and repetitive. Following EPA's denial of AMVAC's requests to waive certain data requirements, AMVAC followed up with additional waiver requests, which usually provided rationales similar to the originals, often with only minor or insignificant changes. In some cases, AMVAC simply opposed the Agency's denials and did not offer any additional, substantive rationale. During this cycle of waiver requests and denials, AMVAC did not initiate attempts to satisfy the subject data requirements. In my experience, this cycle of repeated waiver requests is not common for other registrants and registration review cases. Additionally, explicit statements like AMVAC's that it did not intend to submit certain data required by the DCI are not typical of registrants in general."

AMVAC has delayed providing EPA information for years. And EPA dragged its feet asking AMVAC for information, and failed to hold the chemical company's feet to the fire in a timely fashion when it missed deadlines and turned in shoddy work. For anyone who has followed the pesticide/herbicide re-registration process, this isn't surprising.

I'm glad DCPA is headed off the market, although I'll be the first to say AMVAC's next move could include a lawsuit. And I'll gladly pay a little bit more for my veggies should it come to that. But I've got to say EPA — the public deserves better.

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

Health and farmworker advocates urge ban of herbicide linked to Parkinson's

BY: ARIANA FIGUEROA - SEPTEMBER 17, 2024 5:43 PM



Scott Faber of the Environmental Working Group speaks Sept. 17, 2024, at a Capitol Hill briefing urging the EPA to ban the use of the herbicide paraquat dichloride to protect farmworkers. (Ariana Figueroa/States Newsroom)

WASHINGTON — Public health advocates and farmworkers called for a federal ban on a toxic herbicide they say led to their Parkinson's disease during a Tuesday briefing for congressional staffers.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency will determine next year if the herbicide, paraquat dichloride, should have its license renewed for another 15 years. The herbicide is used for controlling weeds in agriculture settings. It's currently banned in more than 70 countries and has several serious health conditions it's linked to, such as cancer and increases the likelihood of developing Parkinson's disease.

Nora Jackson, a former farmworker of Indiana, said that her cousin, whose job it was to spray paraquat on farms, developed Parkinson's at 55 years old. Signs of Parkinson's usually appear around 60 years old.

"Farmworkers often have to do extremely risky jobs ... but it doesn't have to be that way," Jackson said. "It is possible

to have an agriculture system that does not depend so heavily on paraquat and it does not have to be a pesticide that puts so many people's lives at risk."

The disease has drastically affected his life, Jackson added.

"He now relies heavily on medication and uses a walking stick to be able to walk every day," she said.

The briefing on the health risks of paraquat was hosted by the Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research, Alianza Nacional de Campesinas, which is an alliance for farmworker women, and the Environmental Working Group, a nonprofit that produces research and advocates for public health.

The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research was established by the actor who starred in blockbusters *Back to the Future*, *Doc Hollywood* and *Teen Wolf*. Fox was diagnosed with early onset Parkinson's at the age of 29.

Ban necessary

The EPA has until Jan. 17 to make a decision on paraquat's future availability.

Advocates at Tuesday's event called for the agency to deny paraquat's license renewal, saying other regulations to reduce exposure to the herbicide have come up short.

"Keep in mind that people have been using this chemical as directed, and are still developing Parkinson's disease," Scott Faber, Environmental Working Group's senior vice president of government affairs, said. "So putting more restrictions on how it's used, when it's used, what equipment you use, and so on, is not the answer."

Parkinson's disease affects the nervous system and causes unintended shakiness, trouble with balance and stiffness. There is no cure.

The California Legislature is moving to ban the herbicide.

David Jilbert, of Valley City, Ohio, a former farmworker with a background in engineering, was diagnosed with Parkinson's in 2021.

"As a longtime environmental engineer, I understood the importance of personal protection equipment, and I particularly followed all safety protocols," he said.

He sold his vineyard in 2019 because he wasn't feeling well and his hands were beginning to move slowly.

"My diagnosis changed everything, affecting every aspect of my life, from physical capabilities to emotional wellbeing, financial stability," he said. "There is no cure for Parkinson's. It is degenerative and it will only get worse, not better."

Charlene Tenbrink of Winters, California, was diagnosed with Parkinson's in 2020. She worked on her family farm from 1993 to 2000 where she would mix, load and spray paraquat.

Tenbrink said she felt let down by the federal government because she was unaware of the health risks that paraquat could pose.

"We've been trying to change this for a long time," she said.

Ariana covers the nation's capital for States Newsroom. Her areas of coverage include politics and policy, lobbying, elections and campaign finance.

In vitro fertilization bills from both Democrats and GOP blocked in U.S. Senate

SD's Thune casts one of the no votes; Rounds, recovering from eye surgery, doesn't vote

BY: JENNIFER SHUTT - SEPTEMBER 17, 2024 5:09 PM

WASHINGTON — The closely divided U.S. Senate gridlocked Tuesday over the best way to provide nationwide protections for in vitro fertilization, despite lawmakers from both political parties maintaining they want to do so.

Republicans voted against advancing a Democratic bill that could have prevented states from enacting "harmful or unwarranted limitations" on the procedure and bolstered access for military members and veterans. Two Republicans voted with Democrats — Maine's Susan Collins and Alaska's Lisa Murkowski.

That came just a short time after Senate Democrats — who narrowly control the chamber — in a procedural move blocked a GOP bill from Sens. Ted Cruz of Texas and Katie Britt of Alabama that would have barred Medicaid funding from going to any state that bans IVF.

The 51-44 vote that prevented Democrats' legislation from moving toward a final vote followed numerous floor speeches and press conferences, including by the Harris-Walz presidential campaign, that sought to elevate the issue ahead of the November elections. The measure needed 60 votes to advance.

"This is a chance for my colleagues across the aisle to put their votes where their mouths have been," said Illinois Democratic Sen. Tammy Duckworth, the bill's sponsor and a mom of two children born as a result of IVF. "They say they support IVF. Here you go — vote on this."

Duckworth said the legislation would provide critical IVF services to U.S. military members and veterans, many of whom experience infertility or experience difficulty having children due to their service.

"It allows our military men and women, prior to a deployment into a combat zone, to preserve and freeze their genetic material; so that should they come home with injuries that result in them becoming infertile, they will have already preserved their genetic material so that they can, themselves, start those beautiful families they wanted," Duckworth said.

The 44 no votes included one from Sen. John Thune. His fellow South Dakota Republican, Mike Rounds, has been recuperating from eye surgery and did not vote.

Vice President and Democratic presidential nominee Kamala Harris released a written statement following the vote rebuking GOP senators for blocking the bill.

"Every woman in every state must have reproductive freedom," Harris wrote. "Yet, Republicans in Congress have once again made clear that they will not protect access to the fertility treatments many couples need to fulfill their dream of having a child."

Republicans blocked Democrats' bill earlier this year. But Senate leadership scheduled another vote after Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump reignited the issue in August when he said his administration would mandate health insurance companies pay for IVF — a significant break with how the GOP has approached the issue.

"We are going to be, under the Trump administration, we are going to be paying for that treatment," Trump said during an interview with NBC News. "We're going to be mandating that the insurance company pay."



Illinois Democratic Sen. Tammy Duckworth speaks about access to in vitro fertilization on the steps of the Capitol building on Sept. 17, 2024, along with other Senate Democrats holding photos of families who benefited from IVF. At right, Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., holds a photo of Duckworth's family that includes Duckworth's children, born with the help of IVF.

(Jennifer Shutt/States Newsroom)

Alabama ruling

Democrats began speaking at length about preserving access to IVF earlier this year after the Alabama state Supreme Court issued an opinion in February that frozen embryos constitute children under state law. That ruling forced all the state's IVF clinics to halt their work until the state legislature passed a bill providing criminal and civil protections for those clinics.

Democrats have since argued that legislating the belief life begins at conception, which is championed by most conservative Republicans, is at odds with access to IVF, which typically freezes more embryos than would be implanted.

Those frozen embryos can be preserved or discarded, depending on the patient's wishes, the clinic's policies and state law. Some conservatives believe that discarding shouldn't be legal or are opposed to the process altogether.

The Southern Baptist Convention, for example, voted earlier this year to oppose IVF, writing in a resolution that couples should consider adoption and that the process "engages in dehumanizing methods for determining suitability for life."

"We grieve alongside couples who have been diagnosed with infertility or are currently struggling to conceive, affirm their godly desire for children, and encourage them to consider the ethical implications of assisted reproductive technologies as they look to God for hope, grace, and wisdom amid suffering," it stated.

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Senate Democrats' press for IVF protections has gone hand-in-hand with their efforts to bolster other reproductive rights, like access to birth control and abortion.

The issues could play a significant role in determining the outcome of the presidential election this November as well which political party controls the House and Senate.

Republican vice presidential nominee and Ohio Sen. J.D. Vance missed Tuesday's vote, but voted against advancing Democrats' IVF bill when it was on the floor in June.

IVF bill from Cruz, Britt

Before the Senate held a vote on Democrats' bill, Cruz asked for quick approval of an IVF bill he and Britt introduced earlier this year.

Washington state Democratic Sen. Patty Murray blocked his unanimous consent request.

During debate on that bill, Britt questioned why Democrats haven't scheduled a recorded vote on her legislation, saying it could get the 60 votes needed to advance toward final passage.

"Today, we have an opportunity to act quickly and overwhelmingly to protect continued nationwide IVF access for loving American families," Britt said. "Our bill is the only bill that protects IVF access while safeguarding religious liberty."

The Britt-Cruz legislation has three co-sponsors, including Wyoming Sen. Cynthia Lummis, Kansas Sen. Roger Marshall and Mississippi Sen. Roger Wicker.

Murray said the Britt-Cruz bill didn't address what would happen in states that legislate fetal personhood, which she called "the biggest threat to IVF."

"It is silent on whether states can demand that an embryo be treated the same as a living, breathing person," Murray said. "Or whether parents should be allowed to have clinics dispose of unused embryos, something that is a common, necessary part of the IVF process."

Cruz tried to pass his legislation through the unanimous consent process, which allows any one senator to ask for approval. Any one senator can then block that request from moving forward — as Murray did. There is no recorded vote as part of the UC process.

Cruz previously asked for unanimous consent to pass the bill in June, but was blocked then as well.

Legal protections

Democrats' 64-page bill would have provided legal protections for anyone seeking fertility treatment, including IVF, and for the health care professionals providing that type of care.

It would have barred state and federal governments from "enacting harmful or unwarranted limitations or requirements" on IVF access.

The legislation would have bolstered fertility treatment coverage for members of the military and veterans, as well as their spouses, partners, or gestational surrogates.

The American Society for Reproductive Medicine supports Democrats' legislation. Chief Advocacy and Policy Officer Sean Tipton wrote in a statement released this week that Democrats' IVF bill would "protect the rights of Americans to seek the medical services they may need to have children and ensure no healthcare provider faces legal consequences for trying to help their patients as they seek to build their families."

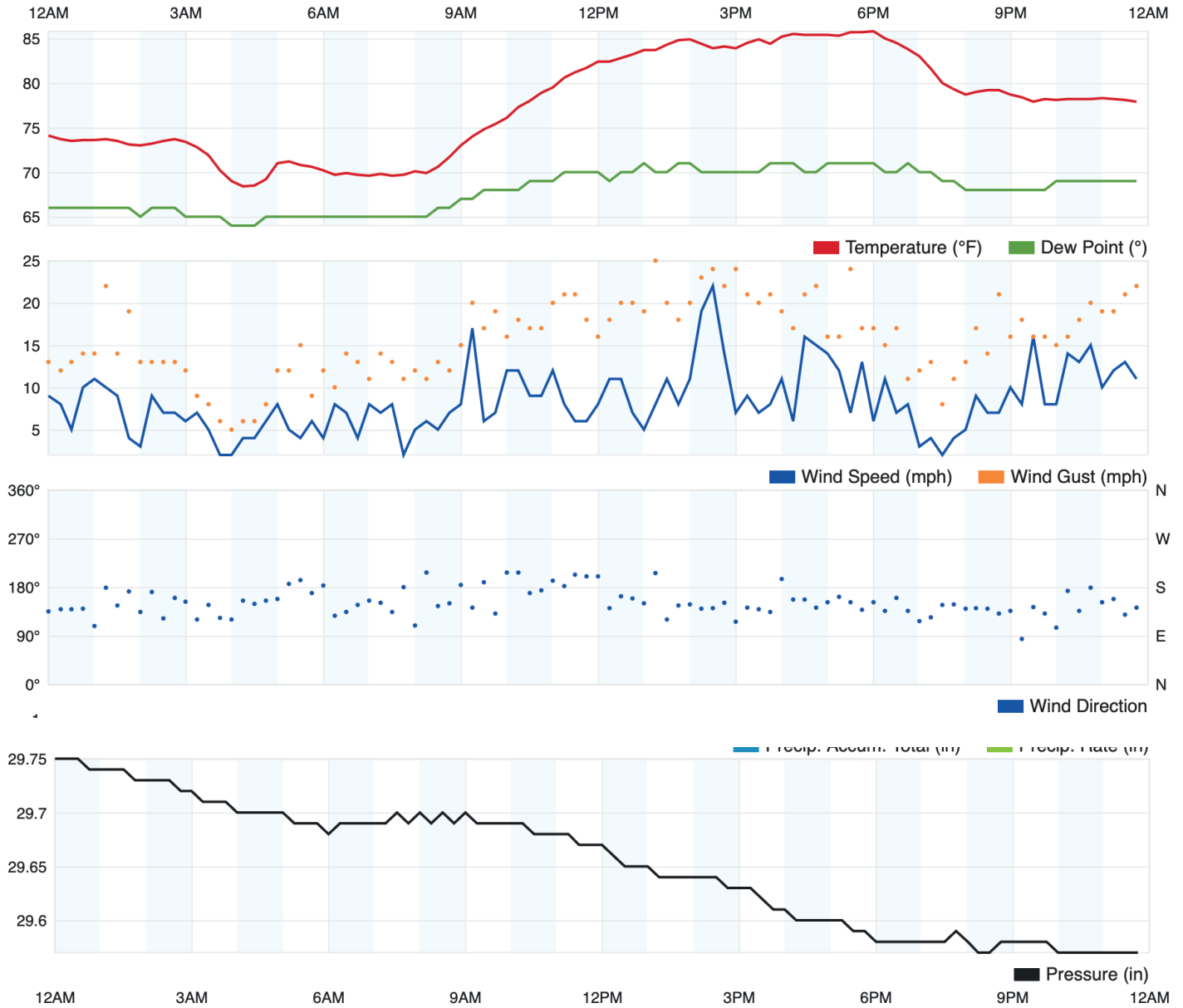
"This legislation also increases access to IVF treatments for all Americans by mandating that employer-sponsored insurance plans and other public insurance plans cover fertility treatment," Tipton wrote. "Significantly, it would ensure the federal government does right by its own employees by providing coverage for active-duty military, veterans, and civilian staff."

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.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Wednesday

Wednesday
Night

Thursday

Thursday
Night

Friday



High: 83 °F

Low: 60 °F

High: 78 °F

Low: 52 °F

High: 80 °F

Breezy.
Chance
Showers then
Sunny

Mostly Clear

Sunny then
Sunny and
Breezy

Mostly Clear

Sunny



Severe Weather Threat Overview

September 18, 2024
3:30 AM

Wednesday Afternoon & Evening

Timing/Location

Storms will mainly affect far eastern SD & western MN during the afternoon/evening.

Primary Threats for the **YELLOW** areas

Tornado Potential

Very Low **LOW** Medium High

Max Hail Size

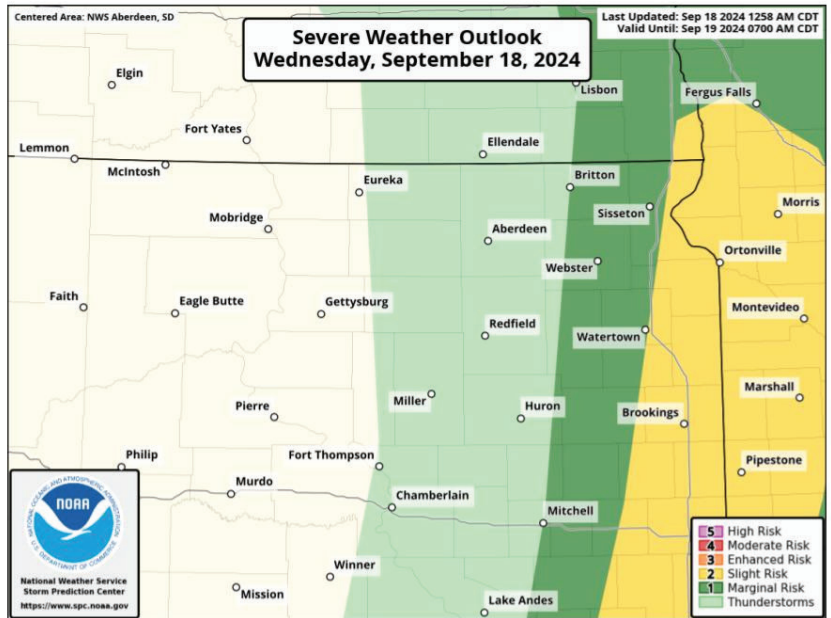
Dimes Quarters **Golfball** Baseball

Max Wind Speed

< 60 mph **60-70 mph** 70-80 mph > 80mph

Heavy Rain/Flooding Potential

Very Low **LOW** Medium High



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Storms are possible across far eastern South Dakota and western Minnesota this afternoon and evening. Storms could generate large hail, strong winds and we cant rule out a tornado or two.

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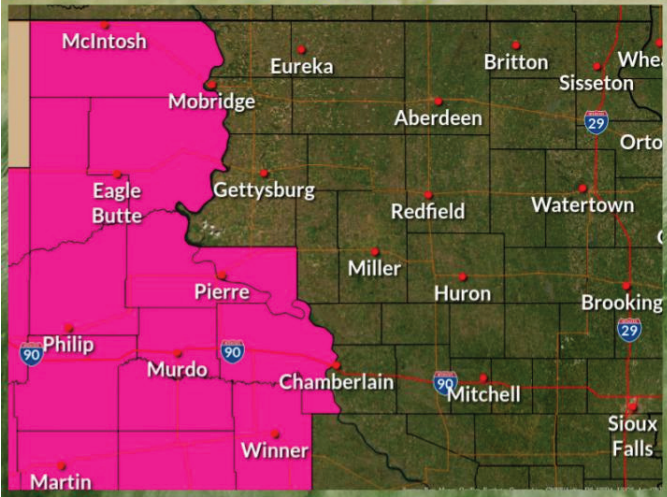


Windy & Dry Across Western/Central South Dakota

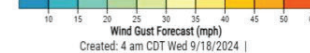
September 18, 2024
4:22 AM

- Dry and gusty conditions will be in place today, mainly over Western & Central South Dakota.
- Due to the dry conditions, expect fires to start or re-ignite more easily.
- Expect fires to spread rapidly & be difficult to extinguish.

Red Flag Warnings



	Wind Gust Forecast (mph)																				
	9/18 Wed																				
	8am	9am	10am	11am	12pm	1pm	2pm	3pm	4pm	5pm	6pm	7pm	8pm	9pm	10pm	11pm	9/19 Thu				
Aberdeen	30↑	29↑	32↑	32↑	31↑	31↑	32↑	33↑	33↑	32↑	30↑	28↑	28↑	28↑	26↑	26↑	24↑	22↑	22↑	21↑	21↑
Britton	32↑	32↑	35↑	33↑	35↑	33↑	33↑	35↑	36↑	33↑	32↑	29↑	30↑	31↑	31↑	32↑	30↑	30↑	29↑	26↑	26↑
Brookings	28↑	29↑	29↑	29↑	28↑	28↑	28↑	29↑	29↑	29↑	26↑	23↑	23↑	23↑	24↑	24↑	23↑	24↑	22↑	22↑	21↑
Chamberlain	20↑	21↑	21↑	21↑	21↑	21↑	22↑	22↑	25↑	26↑	25↑	23↑	21↑	20↑	20↑	20↑	18↑	17↑	15↑	14↑	13↑
Clark	32↑	30↑	32↑	32↑	31↑	31↑	31↑	31↑	31↑	30↑	29↑	26↑	28↑	28↑	29↑	29↑	28↑	26↑	25↑	23↑	22↑
Eagle Butte	24↑	28↑	35↑	38↑	40↑	43↑	44↑	44↑	45↑	40↑	38↑	33↑	32↑	32↑	31↑	31↑	31↑	30↑	31↑	32↑	32↑
Ellendale	30↑	29↑	33↑	33↑	33↑	32↑	35↑	36↑	37↑	33↑	31↑	28↑	28↑	28↑	26↑	26↑	24↑	22↑	22↑	22↑	22↑
Eureka	26↑	28↑	35↑	37↑	38↑	40↑	43↑	45↑	45↑	40↑	36↑	31↑	30↑	29↑	28↑	26↑	23↑	22↑	23↑	24↑	25↑
Gettysburg	24↑	26↑	32↑	35↑	37↑	37↑	39↑	40↑	41↑	38↑	33↑	29↑	28↑	26↑	25↑	23↑	21↑	20↑	21↑	22↑	22↑
Huron	28↑	28↑	28↑	26↑	25↑	25↑	26↑	26↑	25↑	24↑	23↑	22↑	23↑	24↑	23↑	23↑	22↑	21↑	20↑	17↑	15↑
Kennebec	18↑	20↑	24↑	28↑	29↑	30↑	32↑	32↑	33↑	31↑	29↑	25↑	24↑	23↑	22↑	22↑	21↑	20↑	18↑	18↑	17↑
McIntosh	26↑	29↑	37↑	40↑	41↑	45↑	45↑	45↑	45↑	43↑	41↑	38↑	38↑	37↑	36↑	36↑	35↑	33↑	33↑	33↑	33↑
Milbank	25↑	25↑	26↑	28↑	26↑	28↑	29↑	29↑	29↑	28↑	26↑	24↑	23↑	23↑	22↑	23↑	22↑	22↑	22↑	22↑	21↑
Miller	25↑	25↑	29↑	29↑	29↑	29↑	30↑	32↑	32↑	30↑	28↑	24↑	23↑	23↑	24↑	23↑	22↑	21↑	20↑	20↑	20↑
Mobridge	24↑	28↑	32↑	36↑	37↑	39↑	40↑	40↑	40↑	37↑	35↑	32↑	31↑	30↑	29↑	28↑	26↑	26↑	26↑	26↑	28↑
Murdo	22↑	24↑	31↑	35↑	36↑	37↑	39↑	40↑	40↑	38↑	35↑	31↑	28↑	26↑	23↑	22↑	21↑	20↑	20↑	18↑	18↑
Pierre	17↑	20↑	26↑	29↑	31↑	32↑	35↑	36↑	37↑	35↑	31↑	28↑	25↑	23↑	22↑	18↑	17↑	16↑	16↑	16↑	17↑
Redfield	26↑	25↑	29↑	29↑	28↑	28↑	29↑	30↑	30↑	29↑	26↑	24↑	24↑	24↑	24↑	23↑	22↑	21↑	20↑	18↑	17↑
Sisseton	28↑	28↑	30↑	30↑	30↑	31↑	32↑	32↑	30↑	29↑	26↑	26↑	26↑	25↑	26↑	26↑	25↑	25↑	24↑	23↑	23↑
Watertown	32↑	32↑	35↑	33↑	33↑	33↑	35↑	33↑	32↑	30↑	28↑	28↑	29↑	28↑	29↑	29↑	28↑	26↑	26↑	25↑	24↑
Webster	35↑	33↑	38↑	37↑	37↑	36↑	37↑	38↑	37↑	36↑	35↑	32↑	31↑	32↑	32↑	33↑	31↑	30↑	29↑	28↑	26↑
Wheaton	25↑	25↑	28↑	28↑	26↑	28↑	28↑	29↑	29↑	28↑	26↑	24↑	24↑	24↑	24↑	25↑	25↑	24↑	23↑	22↑	22↑



Windy and dry conditions, along with a frontal passage and wind shift, will raise the threat for rapid fire growth and difficult to control behavior for this afternoon in the highlighted area. Make sure that any recent fires are thoroughly extinguished, adhere to burn bans, properly discard cigarettes and keep vehicles off dry vegetation...

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 86 °F at 5:56 PM

Low Temp: 68 °F at 4:24 AM

Wind: 25 mph at 1:14 PM

Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 13 hours, 24 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 95 in 2000

Record Low: 22 in 1896

Average High: 74

Average Low: 46

Average Precip in Sept.: 1.20

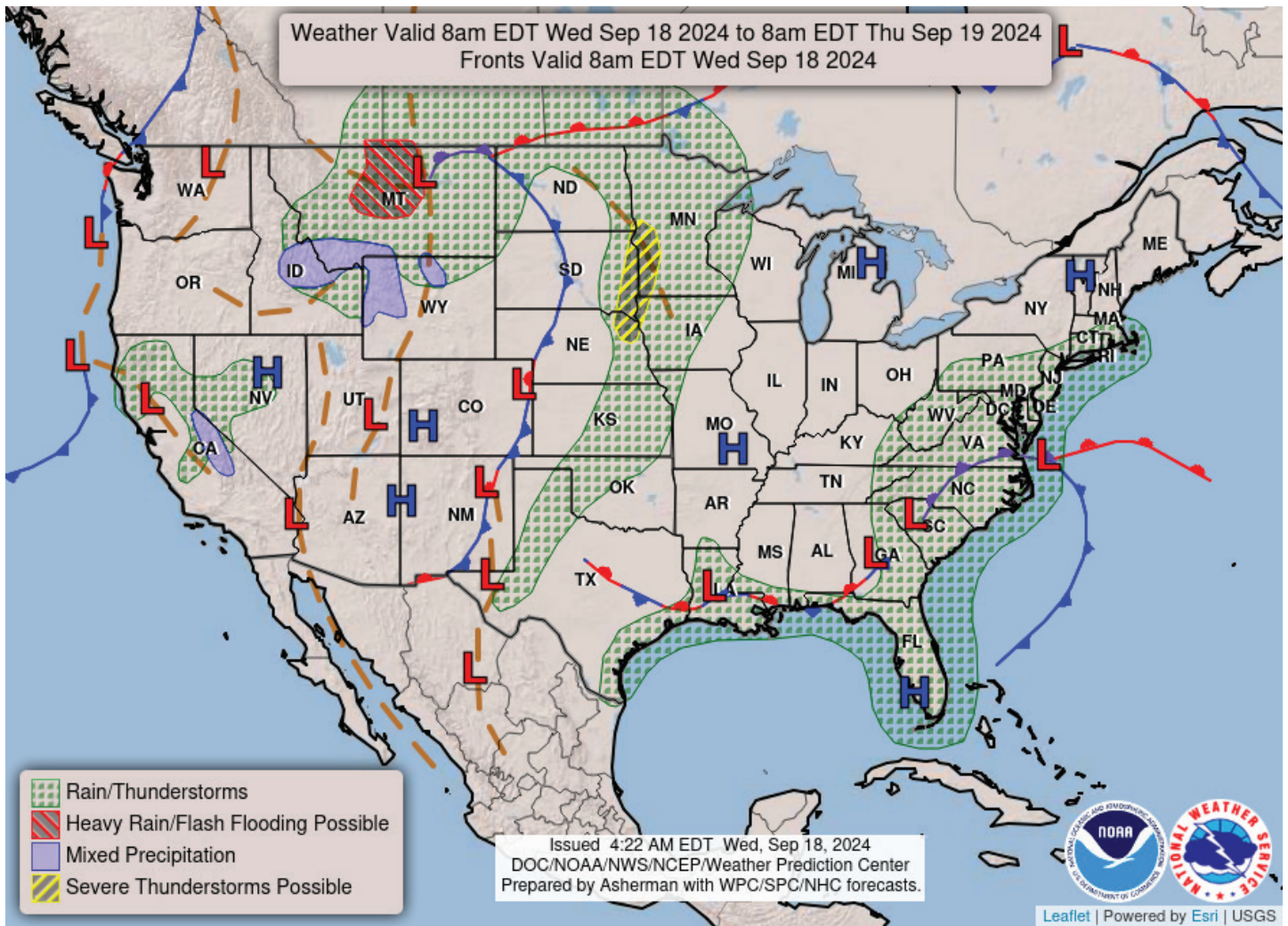
Precip to date in Sept.: 0.19

Average Precip to date: 17.54

Precip Year to Date: 19.61

Sunset Tonight: 7:38:26 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:15:17 am



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Today in Weather History

September 18, 2000: Mid-September record to near record heat occurred across central and northeast South Dakota as well as west central Minnesota. Aberdeen, Kennebec, Pierre, and Wheaton all set record highs for the day. Aberdeen and Wheaton set record highs of 95 degrees. Kennebec rose to a record high of 99 degrees while Pierre rose to 104 degrees on this day in 2000. Some of the near record highs occurred at Timber Lake and Mobridge with 92 degrees and 97 degrees, respectively.

1926: The great "Miami Hurricane" produced winds of 138 mph that drove ocean waters into the Biscayne Bay drowning 135 persons. The eye of the hurricane passed over Miami, at which time the barometric pressure reached 27.61 inches. Tides up to twelve feet high accompanied the storm, which claimed a total of 372 lives.

1941: One of the greatest aurora borealis or northern lights ever observed in the central Atlantic and mid-central portions of the U.S. occurred on the night of September 18-19th. The displays continued from twilight until just before dawn and were observed as far south as Florida and southern California.

1987 - Early morning thunderstorms in northern Texas produced wind gusts to 65 mph at Sulphur Springs, and 2.50 inches of rain in one hour at Commerce, which caused widespread street flooding. Bonham TX received 4.50 inches of rain which also resulted in widespread street flooding as Pig Branch overflowed its banks. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - A strong cold front produced severe thunderstorms in the north central U.S. High winds behind the cold front gusted to 92 mph at Fort Collins CO, and up to a foot of snow blanketed the mountains of Montana, with seven inches reported at Great Falls. High winds in Colorado caused three million dollars damage. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Hurricane Hugo hit Puerto Rico, producing wind gusts to 92 mph at San Juan, and wind gusts to 120 mph at Roosevelt Roads. Hugo produced a storm surge of four to six feet, and northeastern sections of the island were deluged with more than ten inches of rain. Hugo claimed the lives of a dozen persons in Puerto Rico, and caused a billion dollars damage, including 100 million dollars damage to crops. Thunderstorms representing what remained of Hurricane Octave continued to bring heavy rain to the valleys of northern California. Heavier 24 hour rainfall totals included 3.15 inches at Redding, and 2.66 inches at Red Bluff. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)



A SPINE AND A SPIRIT

Kenneth was a shy eight-year-old who loved to read. On one occasion his Sunday school teacher asked him to read part of the story of Daniel. In reading one of the verses, he accidentally read "an exceptional spine was within him" rather than "an excellent spirit was within him." Both phrases, however, clearly describe who Daniel was.

Daniel was recognized for his wise insight, great wisdom, and prophetic visions. As he rose to power and prestige with the king, the other palace administrators became jealous of his privileged position. In their effort to get rid of Daniel, they were successful in persuading the king to outlaw prayer. The fact that prayer was "outlawed" did not matter to Daniel, and rather than give in to political pressure, he continued to pray boldly and publicly to the Lord, his God.

We all recall with pleasure the amazing miracle God performed by protecting him when he was thrown into a den of hungry lions. God was with him and guarded him against any harm. Daniel was faithful to God and God, in turn, was faithful to him and blessed him.

Daniel was able to "show his exceptional spine" every time he was challenged to surrender to the demands of a sinful world. It was the "excellent spirit" that came from his relationship with God that gave him his "exceptional spine." He knew that His God was sovereign, and would guide him and give him His favor for being faithful.

Prayer: Father, give me a faith that will not flinch and a spine that will not shrink when tempted to compromise. Assure me of Your presence and power as I honor You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Now Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators and the satraps by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom. Daniel 6:3

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:

09.17.24

14 31 48 57 64 9

MegaPlier: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$47,000,000

NEXT 2 Days 16 Hrs 32
DRAW: Mins 34 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:

09.16.24

4 16 41 44 52 5

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$9,100,000

NEXT 15 Hrs 47 Mins
DRAW: 33 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:

09.17.24

10 16 23 29 35 18

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT 16 Hrs 2 Mins
DRAW: 34 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:

09.14.24

5 9 11 18 28

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$32,000

NEXT 16 Hrs 2 Mins
DRAW: 34 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:

09.16.24

13 25 38 40 63 23

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT 16 Hrs 31 Mins
DRAW: 34 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:

09.16.24

8 9 11 27 31 17

Power Play: 5x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$176,000,000

NEXT 16 Hrs 31 Mins
DRAW: 34 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
07/09/2025 Legion Auxiliary Salad Luncheon
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 Central High School def. Sioux Falls Lincoln, 25-16, 26-24, 25-23
Andes Central/Dakota Christian def. Scotland, 25-23, 25-22, 26-24
Baltic def. West Central, 25-9, 25-17, 25-18
Bennett County def. Lakota Tech, 28-26, 25-19, 25-20
Bon Homme def. Tripp-Delmont-Armour, 25-17, 25-21, 25-23
Brandon Valley def. Brookings, 30-28, 25-13, 25-15
Bridgewater-Emery def. Freeman, 25-18, 25-18, 25-16
Burke def. Corsica/Stickney, 25-11, 25-12, 25-14
Castlewood def. Deuel, 25-8, 25-13, 25-17
Chester def. Elkton-Lake Benton, 25-16, 25-21, 25-18
Clark-Willow Lake def. Florence-Henry, 17-25, 25-18, 25-22, 25-22
Colman-Egan def. McCook Central-Montrose, 25-14, 25-15, 25-12
Crow Creek Tribal School def. Sunshine Bible Academy, 21-25, 25-21, 25-16, 25-19
Dell Rapids def. Canton, 27-25, 25-17, 25-10
Deubrook def. Iroquois-Lake Preston, 25-12, 25-13, 25-10
Edgemont def. Hemingford, Neb., 25-19, 25-11, 25-20
Elk Point-Jefferson def. Lennox, 25-21, 25-23, 23-25, 27-25
Freeman Academy-Marion def. Irene-Wakonda, 25-21, 25-17, 25-19
Gayville-Volin High School def. Viborg-Hurley, 22-25, 27-25, 25-17, 25-18
Great Plains Lutheran def. Estelline-Hendricks, 25-10, 25-22, 27-25
Harrisburg def. Dakota Valley, 25-18, 25-14, 21-25, 25-13
Hill City def. Hot Springs, 25-12, 25-12, 25-18
Hitchcock-Tulare def. Aberdeen Christian, 25-16, 25-15, 25-20
Kadoka def. New Underwood, 25-5, 25-10, 25-9
Mahpiya Luta Red Cloud def. St. Francis Indian, 25-21, 25-9, 25-20
Menno def. Howard, 25-19, 25-12, 25-14
Milbank def. Waubay/Summit, 25-17, 25-15, 25-12
Mobridge-Pollock def. Timber Lake, 25-23, 25-11, 25-17
Mott-Regent, N.D. def. Lemmon High School, 25-23, 25-15, 23-25, 25-16
Mt. Vernon/Plankinton def. Redfield, 25-19, 25-21, 25-11
North Central def. Langford, 25-21, 25-20, 25-16
Parker def. Beresford, 25-20, 17-25, 25-17, 25-19
Parkston def. Gregory, 25-14, 25-17, 25-16
Potter County def. Highmore-Harrold, 20-25, 25-13, 25-19, 18-25, 18-13
Rapid City Christian def. Philip, 25-16, 25-22, 25-13
Sanborn Central-Woonsocket def. Wessington Springs, 25-15, 25-17, 25-17
Sioux Falls Christian def. Vermillion, 25-8, 25-17, 25-10
Sioux Falls Jefferson def. Tea, 25-13, 25-13, 25-10
Sioux Falls Lutheran def. Dell Rapids St Mary, 25-19, 25-19, 22-25, 25-19
Sioux Falls O'Gorman def. Watertown, 25-27, 15-25, 25-11, 25-14, 15-7
Sioux Falls Washington def. T F Riggs High School, 25-16, 25-12, 25-17
Sioux Valley def. DeSmet, 25-14, 23-25, 25-16, 25-16
Spearfish def. Lead-Deadwood, 25-8, 25-3, 25-16

St Thomas More def. Custer, 25-17, 25-14, 25-22
Todd County def. Chamberlain, 25-21, 24-26, 22-25, 25-21, 15-10
Wagner def. Avon, 22-25, 25-23, 25-19, 25-22
Warner def. Ipswich, 25-20, 25-18, 25-8
Webster def. Sisseton, 26-24, 25-21, 22-25, 25-15
Wilmot def. Tiospa Zina, 25-16, 25-12, 25-21
Winner def. Lyman, 25-16, 28-26, 25-15

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

John Thune is striving to be the next Republican Senate leader, but can he rise in Trump's GOP?

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

MITCHELL, S.D. (AP) — The gold-leafed ceilings and crystal chandeliers of Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago resort are a long way from the small town of Murdo, South Dakota, where Sen. John Thune grew up. But that's where the senator found himself this spring as he launched a bid to become the next Senate Republican leader.

Even before Sen. Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., announced he would end the longest leadership tenure in Senate history, Thune, 63, had approached the contest with the same quiet intensity — fueled by an aversion to losing — he learned on the basketball court and track of Murdo's high school.

The outcome of the secret leadership ballot, expected after the November election, is deeply uncertain. It's a weighty choice for Senate Republicans as they leave the McConnell era, creating a test of whether someone like Thune, who defines himself by the party's traditional values and has at times defied Trump's wishes, can still rise to power.

Senators John Cornyn of Texas, a former whip and strong fundraiser, and Rick Scott of Florida, a Trump ally, are also running for leader. Others could still jump in the race.

Thune acknowledges moments of doubt about his place in the party. He agonized over whether to run again in 2022, even as a clear path to Senate leadership awaited him.

"You tire of just the day-to-day combat," Thune said of his deliberations. "I may not be best-suited to the times in terms of the style, the way I do things. But I just felt like the country was going to need some common-sense leadership, particularly if Sen. McConnell stepped aside."

So it was that Thune made the journey to Mar-a-Lago. It's his hope the visit — along with his endorsement of Trump for president — will help convince Trump they can work together.

Thune told The Associated Press he views their potential relationship "very professionally," and if they both win their respective elections, "then we've got a job to do."

"I think he understands where I'm coming from, so we'll see what happens," Thune added with a chuckle.

Throughout his political career, the South Dakota Republican has shown an athlete's grit and sense for being in the right place at the right time. He struck up a mentorship in high school with former South Dakota Sen. James Abdnor that led to his start in politics. He came back from a gut-wrenching 2002 Senate race loss to successfully challenge then-Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle, a Democrat, and rise to hold the Senate whip position, No. 2 in GOP leadership.

This year, Thune — much like he ran the 800-meter race in high school — has jumped out to a pace meant to exhaust his rivals. He pledged a record-setting \$4 million to the Senate GOP's campaign arm, held meetings this spring with every colleague to lock in support and crisscrossed the country to boost Republicans' bid to win a Senate majority.

But the drive to become leader has forced Thune into a delicate pose: contrasting Trump's style of politics, but stopping short of the direct confrontations that have ended the careers of other Republicans.

Thune's rebuke of Trump in late 2020 — in which he asserted that Trump's efforts to overturn his election loss would "go down like a shot dog" in the Senate — prompted the former president to try, unsuccess-

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fully, to recruit a primary opponent against him in 2022.

Now, Thune argues that Trump can be trusted with the presidency, while acknowledging the transfer of power "was hard, painful and tumultuous in many ways."

"I think with respect to democratic norms, my expectation is that he's going to ... follow them. He's going to do things clearly his own way," Thune said of Trump.

"Stylistically, it might not be the way I would do it or the way any other former president has done it. But in the end, the Constitution, the rule of law, governs this country. That's our bedrock principle, and we can't deviate from that."

Thune also just hates to lose.

He grimaced when discussing his 2002 Senate race loss by 524 votes, tallied late into election night.

He choked up when recalling how his coach comforted him as he sat in the locker room after his potentially game-winning shot clanked off the rim in the final seconds of his high school basketball career.

When it came to basketball — a sport his father, a decorated WWII fighter pilot, had played at the University of Minnesota — Thune never held back.

"He would do whatever it took to win," said Chris Venard, who played center alongside Thune for the Jones County Coyotes.

On winter nights, the basketball games drew practically the entire town of Murdo, population less than 1,000 and a pit stop for truckers and tourists making the crossing between the Missouri River and the Black Hills.

Thune's father, Harold, a teacher and girls' basketball coach at the high school, would take his sons to the gym on Saturday mornings to sharpen their skills. Thune still remembers the game he scored 36 points, yet his dad, who hated ball hogs, singled out a play when he took a shot rather than pass to Venard who was open under the basket.

"My first instinct was always: score," Thune said. "A lot of times he would try and constrain that impulse."

Thune's sense of the world was also formed by the evangelical Christian faith he inherited from his parents. He and his siblings attended Biola University, a Christian college in southern California.

Thune said those lessons compelled him to seek "a life of purpose" while approaching politics with "kindness and truth."

Like many, the Thune family was drawn into the GOP fold by President Ronald Reagan and his skepticism of "big government." Thune remembers casting his first vote for Reagan and liking how he exhibited "a sense of humor, a lightness of spirit and a joyfulness."

In over a dozen interviews, colleagues, former staff and friends described Thune as a driven competitor, yet someone who also values forthrightness, teamwork and humility.

"John is a first-class gentleman," said former Sen. Bill Nelson, who led Democrats on the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee while Thune was chair from 2015 to 2019.

As he worked the crowd at a fairground in South Dakota on a recent August day, it was easy to see why Thune was encouraged by Republican Senate colleagues to explore a 2012 presidential run he did not ultimately pursue.

Lean with a smile that spreads over a chiseled face, Thune slapped backs, recalled names and grasped hands with a firm grip. People felt comfortable enough to call out "John" and the senator received a good-natured ribbing when he accidentally cut in line to put barbecue sauce on his ribeye sandwich.

But the Republican Party has changed since 2012.

During another visit with a Sioux Falls volunteer club, one man wanted to know: What are you doing to get Trump back in the White House?

"Well, we're doing everything we can," Thune began.

"No, you," came the reply. "I want to know what you are doing?"

With elections approaching, Thune is tapping into the mentality of an 800-meter runner on the final lap.

"It's a brutal race," he said. "But you've got to gut it out."

Fire destroys 105-year-old post office on Standing Rock Reservation

SELFRIDGE, N.D. (AP) — A fire destroyed the 105-year-old post office in Selfridge, North Dakota, early Monday.

State and federal authorities are investigating the cause of the fire, KFYZ-TV reported. Five trucks, a tanker and multiple volunteers responded to the fire.

No one was injured and the fire did not spread to anything else, said Selfridge Rural Fire District Secretary Debbie Vollmuth. A video she filmed shows flames leaping out of the building's roof and windows.

The Associated Press left a phone message with the Sioux County sheriff, and emailed a spokesperson for the state attorney general as well as a spokesperson for the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

Selfridge is a town of about 125 people on the Standing Rock Reservation, about 60 miles (96.56 kilometers) from Bismarck.

The reservation, home to the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, straddles the North Dakota-South Dakota border. The tribe drew international attention in 2016 and 2017 for opposing the Dakota Access oil pipeline crossing the Missouri River upstream of the reservation. Monthslong protests unfolded in the area.

Voting for local government opens in Indian-controlled Kashmir for first time after losing autonomy

By AIJAZ HUSSAIN Associated Press

SRINAGAR, India (AP) — A three-phased election for choosing a local government in Indian-controlled Kashmir opened early Wednesday in the first such vote since Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government stripped the disputed region of its special status five years ago.

Authorities deployed thousands of additional police and paramilitary soldiers in the region's seven southern districts where over 2.3 million residents are eligible to cast their votes and chose 24 lawmakers out of 219 candidates in the first phase of the polling.

Wearing riot gears and carrying assault rifles, troops set up checkpoints and patrolled the constituencies in the districts as locals lined up to cast their votes in villages and towns.

The second and third phases are scheduled for Sept. 25 and Oct. 1 in a process that is staggered to allow troops to move around to stop potential violence. Votes will be counted on Oct. 8, with results expected that day.

For the first time, authorities limited access of foreign media to polling stations and denied press credentials to most journalists working with international media, including to The Associated Press, without citing any reason.

India and Pakistan each administer part of Kashmir, but both claim the territory in its entirety. Militants in the Indian-controlled portion of Kashmir have been fighting New Delhi's rule since 1989. Most Muslim Kashmiris support the rebels' goal of uniting the territory, either under Pakistani rule or as an independent country.

India insists the Kashmir militancy is Pakistan-sponsored terrorism. Pakistan denies the charge, and most Kashmiris consider it a legitimate freedom struggle. Tens of thousands of civilians, rebels and government forces have been killed in the conflict.

The vote is the first in a decade, and the first since Modi's Hindu nationalist government in 2019 scrapped the Muslim-majority region's semi-autonomy, downgraded the former state to a federally governed territory and stripped its separate constitution and inherited protections on land and jobs. It was also divided into two federal territories, Ladakh and Jammu-Kashmir, ruled directly by New Delhi, allowing it to appoint administrators to run the territories along unelected bureaucrats and security personnel.

Many people said they knew their votes won't solve the dispute over Kashmir, but provided a rare window to express their frustration with direct Indian control.

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Aamir Ahmed, a first-time voter in Pulwama town, said it was important to elect a local representative "who does not condone wrongdoing."

"We have witnessed a lot of suffering in the last 10 years," Ahmed said.

Another voter, 80-year-old farmer Ali Mohammad Alai, said he had been "reduced to penury by the Modi government" after authorities took away his land given to him decades ago for cultivation by the local administration. "All I want is to get that land back," he said. "Our own government can do that."

People in the Kashmir Valley had layered rights to use of land since reforms in the 1950s that mainly gave Muslim farmers possession of land they tilled for the minority Hindu rulers and its elite. Some of those rights were rescinded after 2019 changes.

Long lines of voters stretched around some polling booths as the day progressed. The region's chief electoral officer said about 41% turnout was recorded as of 1 p.m.

In Kishtwar town, multiple voters said they hoped the polling would culminate in a government that cared about economic development and addressed their main issues. "Be it BJP or some other party or a coalition, we urgently want development and better life. Politics can wait," said Chander Jeet Sharma, 49.

The multistage election will allow Kashmir to have its own truncated government and a local legislature, called an assembly, instead of remaining under New Delhi's direct rule. A chief minister will head a council of ministers in the government.

However, there will be a limited transition of power from New Delhi to the local assembly as Kashmir will continue to be a "Union Territory" — directly controlled by the federal government — with India's Parliament remaining its main legislator. The elected government will have partial control over areas like education, culture and taxation but not over the police. Kashmir's statehood must be restored for the new government to have powers similar to other states of India.

Multiple local parties have campaigned on promises to fight for reversal of 2019 changes and address other key issues like rising unemployment and inflation in the region where locals have struggled amid curtailed civil liberties particularly after the revocation of the special status.

India's ruling BJP, however, has vowed to block any move aimed at undoing those changes but promised to help in the region's economic development.

The region's last assembly election was held in 2014, after which Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party for the first time ruled in a coalition with the local Peoples Democratic Party. But the government collapsed in 2018, after BJP withdrew from the coalition.

Polls in the past have been marked with violence, boycotts and vote-rigging, even though India called them a victory over separatism.

What to know about the deadly pager explosions targeting Hezbollah

By WYATTE GRANTHAM-PHILIPS, MICHAEL BIESECKER, SARAH EL DEEB and SARAH PARVINI Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — In what appears to be a sophisticated, remote attack, pagers used by hundreds of members of Hezbollah exploded almost simultaneously in Lebanon and Syria Tuesday, killing at least nine people — including an 8-year-old girl — and wounding thousands more.

A U.S. official said Israel briefed the U.S. on the operation — in which small amounts of explosive hidden in the pagers were detonated — on Tuesday after it was concluded. The person spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the information publicly.

The Iran-backed militant group blamed Israel for the deadly explosions, which targeted an extraordinary breadth of people and showed signs of being a long-planned operation. Details on how the attack was executed are largely uncertain and investigators have not immediately said how the pagers were detonated. The Israeli military has declined to comment.

Here's what we know so far.

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Why were pagers used in the attack?

Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah previously warned the group's members not to carry cellphones, saying they could be used by Israel to track the group's movements. As a result, the organization uses pagers to communicate.

A Hezbollah official told The Associated Press the exploded devices were from a new brand the group had not used before. The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk to the press, did not identify the brand name or supplier.

Taiwanese company Gold Apollo said Wednesday it had authorized use of its brand on the AR-924 pager model and a Budapest, Hungary-based company called BAC Consulting produced and sold the pagers. Further information on BAC wasn't immediately available.

Nicholas Reese, adjunct instructor at the Center for Global Affairs in New York University's School of Professional Studies, said smart phones carry a higher risk for intercepted communications in contrast to the simpler technology of pagers.

This type of attack will also force Hezbollah to change their communication strategies, said Reese, who previously worked as an intelligence officer, adding that survivors of Tuesday's explosions are likely to throw away "not just their pagers, but their phones, and leaving their tablets or any other electronic devices."

How could sabotage cause these pagers to explode?

Even with a U.S. official confirming it was a planned operation by Israel, multiple theories have emerged Tuesday around how the attack might have been carried out. Several experts who spoke with The Associated Press explained how the explosions were most likely the result of supply-chain interference.

Very small explosive devices may have been built into the pagers prior to their delivery to Hezbollah, and then all remotely triggered simultaneously, possibly with a radio signal.

By the time of the attack, "the battery was probably half-explosive and half-actual battery," said Carlos Perez, director of security intelligence at TrustedSec.

A former British Army bomb disposal officer explained that an explosive device has five main components: A container, a battery, a triggering device, a detonator and an explosive charge.

"A pager has three of those already," said the ex-officer, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he now works as a consultant with clients on the Middle East. "You would only need to add the detonator and the charge."

After security camera footage appeared on social media Tuesday purporting to show one of the pagers exploding on a man's hip in a Lebanese market, two munitions experts offered opinions that corroborate the U.S. official's statement that the blast appeared to be the result of a tiny explosive device.

"Looking at the video, the size of the detonation is similar to that caused by an electric detonator alone or one that incorporates an extremely small, high-explosive charge," said Sean Moorhouse, a former British Army officer and explosive ordinance disposal expert.

This signals involvement of a state actor, Moorhouse said. He adds that Israel's foreign intelligence agency, the Mossad, is the most obvious suspect to have the resources to carry out such an attack.

N.R. Jenzen-Jones, an expert in military arms who is director of the Australian-based Armament Research Services, notes that Israel had been accused of carrying out similar operations in the past. Last year, AP reported that Iran accused Israel of trying to sabotage its ballistic missile program through faulty foreign parts that could explode, damaging or destroying the weapons before they could be used.

How long was this operation?

It would take a long time to plan an attack of this scale. The exact specifics are still unknown, but experts who spoke with the AP shared estimates ranging anywhere between several months to two years.

The sophistication of the attack suggests that the culprit has been collecting intelligence for a long time, Reese said. An attack of this caliber requires building the relationships needed to gain physical access to the pagers before they were sold; developing the technology that would be embedded in the devices; and developing sources who can confirm that the targets were carrying the pagers.

And it's likely the compromised pagers seemed normal to their users for some time before the attack. Elijah J. Magnier, a Brussels-based veteran and a senior political risk analyst with over 37 years experience

in the region, said he has had conversations with members of Hezbollah and survivors of Tuesday's pager attack. He said the pagers were procured more than six months ago.

"The pagers functioned perfectly for six months," Magnier said. What triggered the explosion, he said, appeared to be an error message sent to all the devices.

Based on his conversations with Hezbollah members, Magnier also said that many pagers didn't go off, allowing the group to inspect them. They came to the conclusion that between 3 to 5 grams of a highly explosive material were concealed or embedded in the circuitry, he said.

Jenzen-Jones also adds that "such a large-scale operation also raises questions of targeting" — stressing the number of casualties and enormous impact reported so far.

"How can the party initiating the explosive be sure that a target's child, for example, is not playing with the pager at the time it functions?" he said.

Hezbollah issued a statement confirming at least two members were killed in the bombings. One of them was the son of a Hezbollah member in parliament, according to the Hezbollah official who spoke anonymously. The group later issued announcements that six other members were killed Tuesday, though it did not specify how.

"We hold the Israeli enemy fully responsible for this criminal aggression that also targeted civilians," Hezbollah said, adding that Israel will "for sure get its just punishment."

Mideast Tensions latest: Gold Apollo says a Budapest company made exploding pagers under its brand

By The Associated Press undefined

Taiwanese company Gold Apollo said Wednesday that it authorized its brand on the pagers that exploded in Lebanon and Syria but that another company based in Budapest manufactured them.

Hundreds of handheld pagers exploded almost simultaneously Tuesday across Lebanon and in parts of Syria, killing at least nine people, government and Hezbollah officials said. Officials pointed the finger at Israel in what appeared to be a sophisticated remote attack. The Israeli military declined to comment.

Hezbollah began striking Israel almost immediately after Hamas' Oct. 7 attack that sparked the Israel-Hamas war. Since then, Israel and Hezbollah have exchanged fire daily, coming close to a full-blown war on several occasions and forcing tens of thousands on both sides of the border to evacuate their homes.

Gaza's Health Ministry says more than 41,000 Palestinians have been killed in the territory since Hamas' Oct. 7 attack. The ministry does not differentiate between fighters and civilians in its count but says a little over half of those killed were women and children. Israel says it has killed over 17,000 militants, without providing evidence.

Here's the latest:

Israeli military says it has intercepted 2 suspicious drones

TEL AVIV, Israel — Israel's military said they had intercepted two suspicious drones that approached Israel from Lebanon and Iraq on Wednesday morning, the day after pagers used by the militant group Hezbollah exploded in Lebanon and Syria, killing at least nine people, including an 8-year-old girl, and wounding nearly 3,000. Hezbollah and the Lebanese government blamed Israel for what appeared to be a sophisticated remote attack.

On Wednesday, the Israeli military said they intercepted a drone launched from Lebanon over the Mediterranean Sea near the coast of northern Israel. Another drone launched from Iraq was intercepted by Israeli air force fighter jets. There were no injuries or damage reported.

Israel also began moving more troops to the northern border with Lebanon in preparation for a possible retaliation.

As a precautionary measure, the Israeli military moved its 98th division to the northern border, an official said. The division, which includes infantry, artillery and commando units, has until recently been fighting in Gaza. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to the media.

Hezbollah began firing rockets over the border into Israel on Oct. 8, the day after a deadly Hamas-led

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attack in southern Israel triggered a massive Israeli counteroffensive and the ongoing war in Gaza. Since then, Hezbollah and Israeli forces have exchanged strikes near-daily, killing hundreds in Lebanon and dozens in Israel and displacing tens of thousands on each side of the border.

4 Israeli soldiers killed in southern Gaza and 5 wounded, military says

JERUSALEM — The Israeli military says four soldiers were killed in southern Gaza and five others were wounded, with three of them in serious condition.

The deaths on Tuesday came nearly a year into the war in Gaza, which was triggered by Hamas' Oct. 7 attack. The army did not describe the circumstances, but Israeli media reported that the soldiers were killed by a hidden bomb that exploded inside a building.

One of the four, Staff Sgt. Agam Naim, an army paramedic, was the first female soldier to have been killed in combat in Gaza, according to Israeli media.

Hamas and other armed groups remain active across the territory despite months of heavy Israeli bombardment and ground operations that have destroyed vast areas and displaced most of the population.

Israel says 346 of its soldiers have been killed since the start of ground operations last October. The military says it has killed over 17,000 militants, without providing evidence.

Gold Apollo says it authorized its trademark on the pagers but didn't manufacture them

TAIPEI, Taiwan — Taiwanese company Gold Apollo said Wednesday that it authorized its brand on the pagers that exploded in Lebanon and Syria but that another company based in Budapest manufactured them.

Pagers used by hundreds of members of the militant group Hezbollah exploded near-simultaneously Tuesday in Lebanon and Syria, killing at least nine people, including an 8-year-old girl, and wounding more than 2,000. Hezbollah and the Lebanese government blamed Israel for what appeared to be a sophisticated remote attack.

The AR-924 pagers used by the militants were manufactured by BAC Consulting KFT, based in Hungary's capital, according to a statement released Wednesday by Gold Apollo.

"According to the cooperation agreement, we authorize BAC to use our brand trademark for product sales in designated regions, but the design and manufacturing of the products are solely the responsibility of BAC," the statement read.

Gold Apollo chair Hsu Ching-kuang told journalists Wednesday that his company has had a licensing agreement with BAC for the past three years, but did not provide evidence of the contract.

The AR-924 pager, advertised as being "rugged," contains a rechargeable lithium battery, according to specifications once advertised on Gold Apollo's website before it was apparently taken down Tuesday after the sabotage attack. It could receive text messages of up to 100 characters and claimed to have up to 85 days of battery life. That's something that would be crucial in Lebanon, where electricity outages have been common as the tiny nation on the Mediterranean Sea has faced years of economic collapse. Pagers also run on a different wireless network than mobile phones, making them more resilient in emergencies — one of the reasons why many hospitals worldwide still rely on them.

Stock market today: Global shares trade mixed ahead of Federal Reserve rate decision

By YURI KAGEYAMA AP Business Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Global shares were mixed Wednesday as investors awaited an expected interest rate cut by the U.S. Federal Reserve, the first in more than four years.

France's CAC 40 lost 0.2% in early trading to 7,474.92, while Germany's DAX inched down less than 0.1% to 18,723.53. Britain's FTSE 100 shed 0.5% to 8,268.29. The future for the Dow Jones industrial average rose 0.1%, while that for the S&P 500 futures was up less than 0.1%.

The Bank of Japan and the Bank of England are also holding monetary policy meetings later this week. But neither central bank is expected to move on rates, although the language of what the officials say could be an indicator of later moves and still influence markets.

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Asian markets advanced. Japan's Nikkei 225 gained 0.5% to finish at 36,380.17. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 was virtually unchanged, inching up less than 0.1% to 8,142.10. South Korea's Kospi added 0.1% to 2,575.41.

Trading was closed in Hong Kong for a national holiday. The Shanghai Composite index edged 0.5% higher to 2,717.28.

The Fed's announcement is scheduled for Wednesday, with the overwhelming expectation on Wall Street for a cut to the federal funds rate. The rate has been in a range of 5.25% to 5.50% for over a year.

Lower rates would help boost the slowing economy, as it has become increasingly more expensive to borrow money for everything from houses to cars to corporate debt.

The Fed has been keeping its main interest rate at a two-decade high in hopes of grinding down on the economy enough to stifle high inflation.

Japan reported its trade deficit totaled 695 billion yen, or \$4.9 billion in August, down 26% from a year earlier, according to the Finance Ministry, recording a deficit for the second month straight.

Exports totaled 8.4 trillion yen (\$59 billion), up 5.6% from the same month the previous year. Shipments to Asia rose while exports to the U.S. fell. Imports totaled 9.1 trillion yen (\$64 billion), up 2.3% from a year earlier. By region, imports from European nations, in categories such as pharmaceuticals, showed the strongest growth.

Both numbers fell short of forecasts for 10% growth in exports and even higher increases for imports.

The Japanese yen has gained in value against the U.S. dollar in recent weeks, helping to boost the country's purchasing power.

The dollar slipped to 141.81 Japanese yen from 142.34 yen. The dollar had traded at levels over 150 yen earlier this year.

The euro cost \$1.1131, up from \$1.1117.

In energy dealings, benchmark U.S. crude declined 86 cents to \$70.33 a barrel. Brent crude, the international standard, fell 82 cents to \$72.88 a barrel.

Now a Roe advocate, woman raped by stepfather as a child tells her story in Harris campaign ad

By COLLEEN LONG Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A 22-year-old woman who became an abortion rights advocate after she was raped by her stepfather as a child tells her story in a new campaign ad for Democratic presidential nominee Kamala Harris.

Hadley Duvall says in voiceover that she's never slept a full night in her life — her stepfather first started abusing her when she was five years old, and impregnated her when she was 12. As she speaks, images of Duvall as a child flash on the screen. The soundtrack of the ad is a song by Billie Eilish, who endorsed the vice president on Tuesday.

"I just remember thinking I have to get out of my skin. I can't be me right now. Like, this can't be it," Duvall says. "I didn't know what to do. I was a child. I didn't know what it meant to be pregnant, at all. But I had options."

The ad is part of a continued push by the Harris campaign to highlight the growing consequences of the fall of Roe, including that some states have abortion restrictions with no exceptions for rape or incest. Women in some states are suffering increasingly perilous medical care and the first reported instance of a woman dying from delayed reproductive care surfaced this week. Harris lays the blame squarely on Republican nominee Donald Trump, who appointed three of the conservatives to the U.S. Supreme Court who helped overturn the constitutional right to abortion.

Duvall blames Trump, too.

"Because Donald Trump overturned Roe v. Wade, girls and women all over the country have lost the right to choose, even for rape or incest," she says in the ad. "Donald Trump did this. He took away our freedom."

During the presidential debate on Sept. 10, Trump repeatedly took credit for appointing the three Supreme Court justices and leaned heavily on his catchall response to questions on abortion rights, saying the issue should be left up to the states. He said he would not sign a national abortion ban.

"I'm not signing a ban," he said, adding that "there is no reason to sign the ban."

But he also repeatedly declined to say whether he would veto such a ban if he were elected again — a question that has lingered as the Republican nominee has shifted his stances on the crucial election issue.

Duvall of Owensboro, Kentucky, first told her story publicly last fall in a campaign ad for the governor's race in her home state supporting Democratic Gov. Andy Beshear. Duvall's stepfather was convicted of rape and is in prison; she miscarried.

Beshear won reelection, and Democrats have said Duvall's ad was a strong motivator, particularly for rural, male voters who had previously voted for Trump.

Duvall is also touring the country to campaign for Harris along with other women who have been telling their personal stories since the fall of Roe, joining Pennsylvania Gov. Josh Shapiro last week.

Exploding pagers used in apparent Israeli attack on Hezbollah made in Hungary, accused firm says

By JOHNSON LAI and SIMINA MISTREANU Associated Press

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP) — Taiwanese company Gold Apollo said Wednesday that it authorized its brand on the pagers that exploded in Lebanon and Syria in an apparent Israeli operation targeting Hezbollah's communications network but that another company based in Budapest manufactured them.

Pagers used by the militant group Hezbollah exploded near-simultaneously Tuesday in Lebanon and Syria, killing at least nine people, including an 8-year-old girl, and wounding nearly 3,000.

Hezbollah and the Lebanese government blamed Israel for what appeared to be a sophisticated remote attack.

An American official said Israel briefed the United States on Tuesday after the conclusion of the operation, in which small amounts of explosive secreted in the pagers were detonated. The person spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the information publicly.

The AR-924 pagers were manufactured by BAC Consulting KFT, based in Hungary's capital, according to a statement released Wednesday by Gold Apollo.

"According to the cooperation agreement, we authorize BAC to use our brand trademark for product sales in designated regions, but the design and manufacturing of the products are solely the responsibility of BAC," the statement read.

Gold Apollo chair Hsu Ching-kuang told journalists Wednesday that his company has had a licensing agreement with BAC for the past three years, but did not provide evidence of the contract.

At about 3:30 p.m. Tuesday, as people shopped for groceries, sat in cafes or drove cars and motorcycles, the pagers in their hands or pockets started heating up and then exploding — leaving blood-splattered scenes and panicking bystanders.

It appeared that many of those hit were members of Hezbollah, but it was not immediately clear if non-Hezbollah members also carried any of the exploding pagers.

The blasts were mainly in areas where the group has a strong presence, particularly a southern Beirut suburb and in the Beqaa region of eastern Lebanon, as well as in Damascus, according to Lebanese security officials and a Hezbollah official. The Hezbollah official spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk to the media.

Hezbollah, which has pointed the blame at Israel, said in a statement Wednesday morning that it would continue its normal strikes against Israel "as in all the past days" as part of what it describes as a support front for its ally, Hamas, and Palestinians in Gaza.

"This path is continuous and separate from the difficult reckoning that the criminal enemy must await for its massacre on Tuesday that it committed against our people, our families and our fighters in Lebanon," it said. "This is another reckoning that will come, God willing."

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Hezbollah began firing rockets over the border into Israel on Oct. 8, the day after a deadly Hamas-led attack in southern Israel triggered a massive Israeli counteroffensive and the ongoing war in Gaza. Since then, Hezbollah and Israeli forces have exchanged strikes near-daily, killing hundreds in Lebanon and dozens in Israel and displacing tens of thousands on each side of the border.

At hospitals in Beirut on Wednesday, the chaos of the night before had largely subsided, but relatives of the wounded continued to wait.

Lebanon Health Minister Firas Abiad told journalists during a tour on hospitals Wednesday morning that many of the wounded had severe injuries to the eyes, and others had limbs amputated. Journalists were not allowed to enter hospital rooms or film patients.

The health minister said that the wounded had been distributed among all the area hospitals to avoid any single facility being overloaded and added that Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Syria and Egypt offered to help in treating the patients.

Earlier Wednesday, an Iraqi military plane landed in Beirut carrying medical equipment, airport officials said. Abiad said the plane was carrying 15 tons of medicine and medical equipment.

Experts believe explosive material was put into the pagers prior to their delivery and use in a sophisticated supply chain infiltration.

The AR-924 pager, advertised as being “rugged,” contains a rechargeable lithium battery, according to specifications once advertised on Gold Apollo’s website before it was apparently taken down Tuesday after the sabotage attack. It could receive texts of up to 100 characters.

It also claimed to have up to 85 days of battery life. That would be crucial in Lebanon, where electricity outages have been common after years of economic collapse. Pagers also run on a different wireless network than mobile phones, making them more resilient in emergencies — one of the reasons why many hospitals worldwide still rely on them.

Taiwan’s Ministry of Economic Affairs said from the beginning of 2022 until August 2024, Gold Apollo has exported 260,000 sets of pagers, including more than 40,000 sets between January and August of this year. The ministry said the pagers were exported mainly to European and American countries and that it had no records of direct exports of Gold Apollo pagers to Lebanon.

For Hezbollah, the militants also looked at the pagers as a means to sidestep what’s believed to be intensive Israeli electronic surveillance on mobile phone networks in Lebanon.

“The phone that we have in our hands — I do not have a phone in my hand — is a listening device,” warned Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah in a February speech.

He later added: “I tell you that the phone in your hands, in your wife’s hands, and in your children’s hands is the agent. It is a deadly agent, not a simple one. It is a deadly agent that provides specific and accurate information. Therefore, this requires great seriousness when confronting it.”

Sri Lanka’s plantation workers live on the margins. But politicians still want their votes

By ERANGA JAYAWARDENA and KRISHAN FRANCIS Associated Press

SPRING VALLEY, Sri Lanka (AP) — Whoever Sri Lanka’s next president is, Muthuthevarakittan Manohari isn’t expecting much to change in her daily struggle to feed the four children and elderly mother with whom she lives in a dilapidated room in a tea plantation.

Both leading candidates in Saturday’s presidential election are promising to give land to the country’s hundreds of thousands of plantation workers, but Manohari says she’s heard it all before. Sri Lanka’s plantation workers are a long-marginalized group who frequently live in dire poverty, but they can swing elections by voting as a bloc.

Mahohari and her family are descended from Indian indentured laborers who were brought in by the British during colonial rule to work on plantations that grew first coffee, and later tea and rubber. Those crops are still Sri Lanka’s leading foreign exchange earners.

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For 200 years, the community has lived on the margins of Sri Lankan society. Soon after the country became independent in 1948, the new government stripped them of citizenship and voting rights. Around 400,000 people were deported to India under an agreement with Delhi, separating many families.

The community fought for its rights, winning in stages until achieving full recognition as citizens in 2003.

There are around 1.5 million descendants of plantation workers living in Sri Lanka today, including about 3.5% of the electorate, and some 470,000 people still live on plantations. The plantation community has the highest levels of poverty, malnutrition, anaemia among women and alcoholism in the country, and some of the lowest levels of education.

They're an important voting bloc, turned out by unions that double as political parties that ally with the country's major parties.

Despite speaking the Tamil language, they're treated as a distinct group from the island's indigenous Tamils, who live mostly in the north and east. Still, they suffered during the 26-year civil war between government forces and Tamil Tiger separatists. Plantation workers and their descendants faced mob violence, arrests and imprisonment because of their ethnicity.

Most plantation workers live in crowded dwellings called "line houses," owned by plantation companies. Tomoya Obokata, a U.N. special rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, said after a visit in 2022 that five to ten people often share a single 10-by-12-foot (3.05-by-3.6 meter) room, often without windows, a proper kitchen, running water or electricity. Several families frequently share a single basic latrine.

There are no proper medical facilities in the plantations, and the sick are attended to by so-called estate medical assistants who do not have medical degrees.

"These substandard living conditions, combined with the harsh working conditions, represent clear indicators of forced labour and may also amount to serfdom in some instances," Obokata wrote in a report to the U.N. high commissioner for human rights.

The government has made some efforts to improve conditions for the plantation workers, but years of fiscal crisis and the resistance of powerful plantation companies have blunted progress. Access to education has improved, and a small group of entrepreneurs, professionals and academics descended from plantation workers has emerged.

This year, the government negotiated a raise in the minimum daily wage for a plantation worker to 1,350 rupees (\$4.50) per day, plus an additional dollar if a worker picks more than 22 kilos in a day. Workers say this target is almost impossible to achieve, in part because tea bushes are often neglected and grow sparsely.

The government has built better houses for some families and the Indian government is helping to build more, said Periyasamy Muthulingam, executive director of Sri Lanka's Institute of Social Development, which works on plantation worker rights.

But many promises have gone unfulfilled. "All political parties have promised to build better houses during elections but they don't implement it when they are in power," Muthulingam said.

Muthulingam says more than 90% of the plantation community is landless because they have been left out of the government's land distribution programs.

In this election, sitting President Ranil Wickremesinghe standing as an independent candidate has promised to give the line houses and the land they stand on to the people who live in them, and help develop them into villages. The main opposition candidate, Sajith Premadasa, has promised to break up the plantations and distribute the land to the workers as small holdings.

Both proposals will face resistance from the plantation companies.

Manohari says she's not holding out hope. She's more concerned with what's going to happen to her 16-year-old son after he was forced to drop out of school due to lack of funds.

"The union leaders come every time promising us houses and land and I would like to have them," she said. "But they never happen as promised."

March for Bolivia's ex-President Morales turns violent, as political

crisis escalates

By PAOLA FLORES Associated Press

CARACOLLO, Bolivia (AP) — Thousands of anti-government demonstrators marching in support of Bolivia's former President Evo Morales clashed on Tuesday with counterprotesters blocking their way, a stark sign of an escalating power struggle in the volatile Andean nation.

In his most brazen show of force yet against current President Luis Arce, Morales sent word to his followers to mobilize what he called a "March to Save Bolivia," a 190-kilometer (118 mile)-trek from the small village of Caracollo to the capital, La Paz, denouncing the government of his protege-turned-bitter rival.

Morales, a former coca grower, has retained significant support among poor and Indigenous Bolivians despite his resignation in 2019 amid mass protests over his disrupted re-election.

The march in solidarity with him began peacefully Tuesday morning, but turned violent hours later when hundreds of counterprotesters, armed with tear gas bombs, stones and firecrackers, spread across the highway waiting to confront the nearly 10,000 marchers. Some of them set a giant effigy of Morales on fire.

The Morales supporters, raising multi-colored Indigenous flags and chanting against Bolivia's economic crisis, surged toward them, using slingshots to pelt their adversaries with rocks as police in pickup trucks and on motorbikes looked on. Morales' followers soon forced the counterprotesters to retreat, their shouts — "Evo, Bolivia wants you back!" — drowning out the pro-Arce activists who chanted, "Evo, you traitor, your time has passed."

A top official in Arce's government, Eduardo Del Castillo, told reporters that 13 people were injured in the scuffles, including three police officers. Associated Press reporters saw some pro-Morales marchers chasing the counterdemonstrators into the rolling Andean highlands on either side of the highway, beating them with sticks, pushing them to the ground and kicking them.

Arce and his ministers accused Morales of trying to orchestrate a coup. Using exaggerated, apocalyptic rhetoric, Del Castillo denounced Morales' protest as a "death march" and said that the former president seeks "to destroy democracy in Bolivia and end the lives of Bolivians." He denied that police used force against peaceful protesters, insisting that officers were attacked first.

Morales, for his part, claimed that the government sent plainclothes police officers to stir up trouble and vandalize protesters' vehicles, saying that Arce's government "has lost respect for human rights and laws in the country."

The mood was largely defiant late Tuesday at a protest encampment in Panduro, in the mining state of Oruro, where the road weary marchers spent the night.

"The government is the one that sent police officers to try to stop us, but we were united and defeated them," said Yamile Cruz, leader of Frutcas, a group of Indigenous farmers on the edge of the world's largest salt flat. "This march will not retreat despite the government's intentions."

Tuesday's mayhem deepened the rift at the top of Bolivia's governing party, threatening to take the political feud between Morales and Arce into a dramatic new phase. Morales, Bolivia's first Indigenous President who oversaw the country's commodities boom from 2006 to 2019, seeks to run against Arce, his former economy minister, in next year's presidential election.

Protesters at the march Tuesday demanded that Morales be allowed on the 2025 electoral ballot despite a ruling by Bolivia's constitutional court last year that Arce insists disqualifies him. Morales has dismissed the court resolution as politically motivated.

"They not only want to disqualify me, they want to restrict political rights," Morales told reporters at the march. "Above all, we want the president and his government to heed our demands."

Cracks in the governing Movement Toward Socialism, or MAS, first opened in 2019, when Morales ran for an unconstitutional third term. He won a contested vote plagued by allegations of fraud, setting off mass protests that caused 36 deaths and prompted Morales to resign and flee the country. He returned and launched his political comeback after Arce, his choice candidate at the time, won the 2020 election.

The political rivalry has divided Congress and exacerbated an economic crisis stemming from the depletion of Bolivia's foreign-exchange reserves. Protesters on Tuesday decried Arce's failure to halt the spiral

and recalled Morales' tenure as one of economic growth and social uplift.

"We are suffering from hunger," said Felix Torres, a peasant protester from the highlands. "This is not how you govern."

'Fake heiress' Anna Sorokin debuts on 'Dancing with the Stars' — with a sparkly ankle monitor

By JEFF TURNER Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Convicted con artist Anna Sorokin has hit the dancefloor on "Dancing With the Stars" with a featherweight — and very sparkly — ankle monitor.

The so-called 'fake heiress,' who was convicted of swindling banks, hotels and friends in 2019 after falsely building a reputation as a wealthy German heiress named Anna Delvey, debuted the ballroom-worthy ankle monitor during the premiere of "Dancing With the Stars'" new season Tuesday night.

"It's actually not a big issue at all. It's pretty light and I asked them to make it tight so it doesn't dangle. So it's not so bad," she told The Associated Press after the premiere. She and dance pro Ezra Sosa performed a routine set to Sabrina Carpenter's "Espresso."

"It's the real star of the show, let's be honest here," Sosa said of Sorokin's bedazzled ankle monitor.

"I think it's kind of funny how people like — it's not like an ankle weight," Sosa said. "It's not like 20 pounds. It's like literally less than a pound and it's not a big deal."

Sorokin acknowledged her debut didn't go as planned.

"I feel relieved that it's over," she said. "I feel like my dance could have been a little bit better, but I'm happy I've done this and it was a great experience all over."

Sorokin said she hopes viewers will be somewhat forgiving despite her criminal history.

"Hopefully people will give me, will give me a chance to show what I can do. And I served my time and I repaid my restitution," she said.

Early reviews from fans were not positive, with the phrase "Anna Delvey's Lackluster DWTS Debut" among those trending on the social media site X.

While she was released from prison in February 2021, immigration authorities picked her up shortly after she got out, claiming she overstayed her visa and must be returned to her native Germany. The "Inventing Anna" inspiration was in ICE custody for over a year before a judge cleared the way for her to switch to home confinement in October 2022 while she fights deportation.

Her release terms had to be amended to allow her to travel from New York to Los Angeles for filming.

Hezbollah is hit by a wave of exploding pagers that killed at least 9 people and injured thousands

By BASSEM MROUE, ABBY SEWELL and KAREEM CHEHAYEB Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Pagers used by hundreds of members of the militant group Hezbollah exploded near-simultaneously Tuesday in Lebanon and Syria, killing at least nine people, including an 8-year-old girl, and wounding several thousand, officials said. Hezbollah and the Lebanese government blamed Israel for what appeared to be a sophisticated remote attack.

An American official said Israel briefed the United States on Tuesday after the conclusion of the operation, in which small amounts of explosive secreted in the pagers were detonated. The person spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the information publicly.

The Israeli military declined to comment.

Among those wounded was Iran's ambassador to Lebanon. The mysterious explosions came amid rising tensions between Israel and Iran-backed Hezbollah, which have exchanged fire across the Israel-Lebanon border since the Oct. 7 attack by Hamas that sparked the war in Gaza.

The pagers that blew up were apparently acquired by Hezbollah after the group's leader ordered members

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in February to stop using cellphones, warning they could be tracked by Israeli intelligence. A Hezbollah official told The Associated Press the pagers were a new brand, but declined to say how long they had been in use.

Taiwanese company Gold Apollo said Wednesday that it authorized its brand on the AR-924 pagers used by the Hezbollah militant group, but the devices were produced and sold by a company called BAC.

At about 3:30 p.m. local time on Tuesday, as people shopped for groceries, sat in cafes or drove cars and motorcycles in the afternoon traffic, the pagers in their hands or pockets started heating up and then exploding — leaving blood-splattered scenes and panicking bystanders.

It appeared that many of those hit were members of Hezbollah, but it was not immediately clear if non-Hezbollah members also carried any of the exploding pagers.

The blasts were mainly in areas where the group has a strong presence, particularly a southern Beirut suburb and in the Beqaa region of eastern Lebanon, as well as in Damascus, according to Lebanese security officials and a Hezbollah official. The Hezbollah official spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk to the press.

The explosions came hours after Israel's internal security agency said it had foiled an attempt by Hezbollah to kill a former senior Israeli security official using a planted explosive device that could be remotely detonated.

The United States "was not aware of this incident in advance" and was not involved, State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said. "At this point, we're gathering information."

Experts said the pager explosions pointed to a long-planned operation, possibly carried out by infiltrating the supply chain and rigging the devices with explosives before they were delivered to Lebanon.

Whatever the means, it targeted an extraordinary breadth of people with hundreds of small explosions — wherever the pager carrier happened to be — that left some maimed.

One online video showed a man picking through produce at a grocery store when the bag he was carrying at his hip explodes, sending him sprawling to the ground and bystanders running.

At overwhelmed hospitals, wounded were rushed in on stretchers, some with missing hands, faces partly blown away or gaping holes at their hips and legs, according to AP photographers. On a main road in central Beirut, a car door was splattered with blood and the windshield cracked.

Lebanon Health Minister Firas Abiad told Qatar's Al Jazeera network at least nine people were killed, including an 8-year-old girl, and some 2,750 were wounded — 200 of them critically — by the explosions. Most had injuries in the face, hand, or around the abdomen.

It appeared eight of the dead belonged to Hezbollah. The group issued a statement confirming at least two members were killed in the pager bombings. One of them was the son of a Hezbollah member in Parliament, according to the Hezbollah official who spoke anonymously. The group later issued announcements that six other members were killed Tuesday, though it did not specify how.

"We hold the Israeli enemy fully responsible for this criminal aggression that also targeted civilians," Hezbollah said, adding that Israel will "for sure get its just punishment."

Iranian state-run IRNA news agency said that the country's ambassador, Mojtaba Amani, was superficially wounded by an exploding pager and was being treated at a hospital.

Previously, Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah had warned the group's members not to carry cellphones, saying they could be used by Israel to track and target them.

Sean Moorhouse, a former British Army officer and explosive ordnance disposal expert, said videos of the blasts suggested a small explosive charge — as small as a pencil eraser — had been placed into the devices. They would have had to have been rigged prior to delivery, very likely by Mossad, Israel's foreign intelligence agency, he said.

Elijah J. Magnier, a Brussels-based senior political risk analyst, said he spoke with Hezbollah members who had examined pagers that failed to explode. What triggered the blasts, he said, appeared to be an error message sent to all the devices that caused them to vibrate, forcing the user to click on the buttons to stop the vibration. The combination detonated a small amount of explosives hidden inside and ensured that the user was present when the blast went off, he said.

Israel has a long history of carrying out deadly operations well beyond its borders. This year, separate Israeli airstrikes in Beirut killed senior Hamas official Saleh Arouri and a top Hezbollah commander. A mysterious explosion in Iran, also blamed on Israel, killed Ismail Haniyeh, Hamas' supreme leader.

Israel has killed Hamas militants in the past with booby-trapped cellphones and it's widely believed to have been behind the Stuxnet computer virus attack on Iran's nuclear program in 2010.

The pager bombings are likely to stoke Hezbollah's worries about vulnerabilities in security and communications as Israeli officials are threaten to escalate their monthslong conflict. The near-daily exchanges of fire between Israel and Hezbollah have killed hundreds in Lebanon and several dozen in Israel, and have displaced tens of thousands on both sides of the border.

Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, the U.N. special coordinator for Lebanon, deplored the attack and warned that it marks "an extremely concerning escalation in what is an already unacceptably volatile context."

On Tuesday, Israel said that halting Hezbollah's attacks in the north to allow residents to return to their homes is now an official war goal. Israeli Defense Minister Gallant said the focus of the conflict is shifting from Gaza to Israel's north and that time is running out for a diplomatic solution with Hezbollah.

Speaker Johnson takes another crack at spending bill linked to proof of citizenship for new voters

By KEVIN FREKING Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The House is scheduled to vote Wednesday on Speaker Mike Johnson's proposal that links the funding of the federal government for the new budget year with a mandate that states require proof of citizenship when people register to vote.

Johnson pulled the bill from consideration last week and said he would work over the weekend to build consensus for it within the Republican ranks. It's unclear whether he was able to do so as some GOP members have concerns about continuing current spending levels, but Johnson said he is determined to hold the vote regardless. Meanwhile, Democrats overwhelmingly oppose the measure.

Requiring new voters to provide proof of citizenship has become a leading election-year priority for Republicans raising the specter of noncitizens voting in the U.S., even though it's already illegal to do so and research has shown that such voting is rare.

"I urge all of my colleagues to do what the overwhelming majority of the people of this country rightfully demand and deserve — prevent non-American citizens from voting in American elections," Johnson said Tuesday.

Johnson told reporters he was not ready to discuss an alternative plan to keep the government funded other than what will come before the House on Wednesday.

"I'm not having any alternative conversations. That's the play. It's an important one. And I'm going to work around the clock to try and get it done," Johnson said.

House members also said Johnson was not discussing alternatives with them should the bill fail.

"There is no Plan B," said Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart, R-Fla.

Lawmakers are not close to completing work on the dozen annual appropriations bills that will fund the agencies during the next fiscal year, so they'll need to approve a stopgap measure to prevent a partial shutdown when the new fiscal year begins Oct. 1.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., said the only way to prevent a government shutdown was for both sides to work together on an agreement. He said the House vote announced by Johnson was doomed to fail.

"The only thing that will accomplish is make clear that he's running into a dead end," Schumer said. "We must have a bipartisan plan instead."

The legislation would fund agencies at current levels while lawmakers work out their differences on a full-year spending agreement.

Democrats, and some Republicans, are pushing for a short extension. A temporary fix would allow the current Congress to hammer out a final bill after the election and get it to President Joe Biden's desk for

his signature.

But Johnson and some of the more conservative members of his conference are pushing for a six-month extension in the hopes that Republican nominee Donald Trump will win the election and give them more leverage when crafting the full-year bill.

Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell declined to weigh in on how long to extend funding. He said Schumer and Johnson, ultimately, will have to work out a final agreement that can pass both chambers.

"The one thing you cannot have is a government shutdown. It would be politically beyond stupid for us to do that right before the election because certainly we would get the blame," McConnell said.

On Sunday, Johnson traveled to Florida to meet with Trump, who had earlier seemingly encouraged a government shutdown if Republicans "don't get assurances on Election Security." Trump said on the social media platform Truth Social that they should not go forward with a stopgap bill without such assurances.

The House approved a bill with the proof of citizenship mandate back in July. Some Republicans who view the issue as popular with their constituents have been pushing for another chance to show their support for the measure.

Sean 'Diddy' Combs' indictment alleges he used power to build empire of sexual crime

By LARRY NEUMEISTER, MICHAEL R. SISAK, JENNIFER PELTZ and ANDREW DALTON Associated Press NEW YORK (AP) — For 10 months, rumblings, lawsuits, law enforcement raids and mounting allegations of widespread sexual abuse had surrounded Sean "Diddy" Combs. The business empire, cultural cachet and fatherly image he had cultivated in the decades since he became a hot young hip-hop mogul in the 1990s had begun to erode.

On Tuesday, those ripples became a wave with the unsealing of a sweeping indictment alleging years of sex trafficking and conspiracy, to which he pleaded not guilty before a federal magistrate ordered him jailed without bail as he awaits trial.

The indictment accuses Combs of presiding over a sordid empire of sexual crimes that used his "power and prestige" for "sex trafficking, forced labor, interstate transportation for purposes of prostitution, drug offenses, kidnapping, arson, bribery and obstruction of justice."

It describes the inducement of female victims and male sex workers into drugged-up, elaborately produced sexual performances dubbed "Freak Offs" that Combs arranged, directed, masturbated during and often recorded. The events would sometimes last days and require IVs to recover from, the indictment said, and Combs used his employees as though they were a film crew.

It alleges he coerced and abused women for years while using blackmail, including the videos he shot, and shocking acts of violence to keep his victims in line, coordinated and facilitated from the top down by a network of associates and employees.

Combs' attorney Marc Agnifilo declared his client's innocence, and said they would appeal the bail decision, with a hearing expected Wednesday afternoon. Combs, 54, was led out of court without handcuffs, and turned to his family as he left.

"Sean Combs has never evaded, avoided, eluded or run from a challenge in his life," the defense said in a court filing. "He will not start now."

For all the revelations that came Tuesday, most of the acts it outlines had been described in detail in the original November lawsuit filed by his former longtime girlfriend and protege, the R&B singer Cassie, whose legal name is Cassandra Ventura. The suit was settled the following day, but its allegations would do anything but go away.

Its descriptions of beatings, sexual assaults, silencing tactics and "Freak Offs" were echoed throughout the criminal indictment, though it did not use her name or the names of any other women.

Agnifilo, also without naming Ventura but clearly referring to her, argued at Tuesday's arraignment that the entire criminal case is an outgrowth of one long-term, troubled-but-consensual relationship that faltered amid infidelity.

The "Freak Offs," Agnifilo contended, were an expansion of that relationship, and not coercive.

"Is it sex trafficking?" Agnifilo asked. "Not if everybody wants to be there."

Prosecutors, however, portrayed the scope as far larger. They said in court papers that they had interviewed more than 50 victims and witnesses and expect the number to grow.

Like many aging hip-hop figures — including many of those he beefed with in the bi-coastal rap feuds of the 1990s alongside the Notorious B.I.G. — the Bad Boy Records founder Combs had established a gentler, more worldly public image, as a doting father to seven children and a respected international businessman, whose annual "White Party" in the Hamptons was once a must-have invitation for the jet-setting elite.

But prosecutors said he used the same companies, people and methods he used to build his business and cultural power to facilitate his crimes. They said they would prove it with financial, travel and billing records, electronic data and communications and videos of the "Freak Offs" to prove their case.

Both Ventura's lawsuit and a Tuesday court filing from prosecutors say Combs set fire to someone's vehicle by slicing open its convertible top and dropping in a Molotov cocktail, and describe his punching Ventura, dragging her by her hair and kicking her at a Los Angeles hotel in 2016.

Security video aired by CNN in May showed that beating. Combs soon apologized, saying, "I was disgusted when I did it." But it would be a major turning point in public perception. He returned a key to the city at the request of New York Mayor Eric Adams, and Howard University cut ties with him.

"A year ago, Sean Combs stood in Times Square and was handed a key to New York City," Manhattan-based U.S. Attorney Damian Williams said at a news conference Tuesday. "Today, he's been indicted and will face justice."

The AP does not typically name people who say they have been sexually abused unless they come forward publicly, as Ventura did.

Combs was arrested late Monday in a Manhattan hotel, roughly six months after federal authorities raided his luxurious homes in Los Angeles and Miami and revealed they were conducting a sex trafficking investigation.

During the searches, law enforcement seized narcotics, videos of the "Freak Offs" and more than 1,000 bottles of baby oil and lubricant, according to prosecutors. They said agents also seized firearms and ammunition, including three AR-15s with defaced serial numbers.

The indictment portrays Combs as so violent that he caused injuries that often took days or weeks to heal. His employees and associates sometimes witnessed his violence and kept victims from leaving or tracked down those who tried, the indictment said.

A conviction on every charge in the indictment would require a mandatory 15 years in prison with the possibility of a life sentence.

Combs and his attorneys denied similar allegations made by others in a string of lawsuits filed after Ventura's.

New program will help inmates earn high school diplomas with tablets

By KATE PAYNE Associated Press/Report for America

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (AP) — A top supplier of digital devices in U.S. prisons is launching a new program to help incarcerated individuals earn a high school diploma by using the company's tablets.

Advocates say the expansion in virtual education is promising, especially since many inmates lack basic literacy skills. But some advocates have said there are limits to what that prison technology can accomplish.

The company ViaPath, which sells secure devices and telecommunications services for use in the criminal justice system, has announced that inmates across the country will soon be able to enroll in virtual classes through a partnership with Promising People, an education technology company, and American High School, a private online school based in South Florida that will grant the diplomas.

The asynchronous classes will be available for free on ViaPath's tablets, 700,000 of which the company says are already in use in nearly 2,000 prisons and jails.

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"If you get a high school diploma, you get a secondary education along with some trades and skills. The likelihood of you recidivating back into our prisons are very small," said Tony Lowden, Chief Social Impact Officer for ViaPath. "We believe there's an opportunity to help men and women come home differently."

A meta-analysis by the RAND Corporation found that education significantly reduces recidivism, suggesting that every \$1 invested in education in prisons could save \$4-5 on reincarceration costs.

Lowden said the high school diploma program will offer a more comprehensive education than existing GED courses and provide inmates with greater earning potential once they're released. The company said it will also offer career and technical education through virtual reality headsets.

ViaPath maintains that its tablets are free for inmates to use and that it won't charge for the educational programming. Still, prison telecoms is a lucrative industry, with state and local governments signing multimillion dollar contracts for phone services, tablets and apps that inmates can use to call loved ones, stream music or read e-books — for a fee. Charges for those services can rack up quickly for incarcerated individuals who make just 25 cents an hour, if that, according to the Prison Policy Initiative.

After being incarcerated for 11 years in Florida, Ryan Moser knows the conveniences of prison tablets — and the shortcomings.

"There's a lot of advantages to the tablet. You can study whenever you want," said Moser, who's now a freelance journalist and communications consultant.

But using a tablet behind bars isn't like scrolling on an iPad at home, Moser said. The devices are generally charged or updated at a central kiosk inside the prison, and access can be inconsistent and unpredictable — and is ultimately up to correctional officers.

"I remember it taking four days to get my tablet charged," Moser said. "If you were a discipline problem or if you were someone that gave them an attitude, they might keep (your tablet) for a week, two weeks."

Keri Watson heads the Florida Prison Education Project at the University of Central Florida, which offers college-level courses inside prisons. She has questions about the delivery of virtual instruction behind bars but said she's heartened by efforts to improve access.

"The more programs in as many modalities as possible, the better," Watson said.

Digital infrastructure has helped prisons continue offering programming at times when volunteers can't get inside, such as through the COVID-19 pandemic or during a security lockdown.

During the pandemic, Watson said her staff had to shift their in-person classes to virtual instruction through tablets provided by a different company. She said it was a difficult transition.

"The technology was not there," she said. "So until it can be more like the technology that can be offered to non-incarcerated students, I'm not sure it's feasible."

The devices' functions are limited by design for security purposes. Lowden, the ViaPath official, told The Associated Press that the company's tablets will not carry notetaking apps due to security risks like inmates communicating covertly.

Still, advocates say inmates desperately need more access to education to prepare them for their release. According to the most recent annual report for Florida's state prison system, 1,339 inmates earned a GED in 2022, less than 2% of the state's incarcerated population of more than 80,000 people.

"While participation in educational programming remains optional, overall inmate participation in these programs continues to rise," the Florida Department of Corrections said in a statement to the AP. "The Department has focused its resources on programming that addresses functional literacy and vocational training."

In his years as a GED tutor at a state prison near the Florida Everglades, Moser saw the impact that a basic education could have on his fellow inmates.

"I remember seeing the looks on guys' faces," Moser said. "Getting into education and accomplishing something there was one of the proudest moments for some of these guys in their life."

Moser said the virtual high school diploma program could help meet the basic educational needs of inmates and let them sidestep waiting lists for in-person classes. But just like on the outside, he said there's "no substitute" for incarcerated students being able to sit in a real classroom and learn from a qualified teacher.

Seen abroad as a leader on Indigenous rights, New Zealand enters a divisive new era

By CHARLOTTE GRAHAM-McLAY Associated Press

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP) — On the eve of New Zealand's Māori language celebration week, the country's right-wing political leaders ordered public agencies to stop affirmative action policies for Māori people, who are disadvantaged on almost every metric.

The lawmakers then posted on social media about their enthusiasm for the Indigenous tongue. "In New Zealand we're lucky to have this language and I'm glad to celebrate it," Prime Minister Christopher Luxon of the center-right National party wrote on Facebook Monday.

Māori was not solely "the preserve of people who think a certain way," said David Seymour, the leader of populist party ACT — whose detractors accuse him of anti-Māori policies — in a video introducing his followers to economic terms in the language.

Their remarks reflected the exploding popularity of Māori culture and language — which has reversed course from the brink of extinction decades ago to become part of everyday life in New Zealand. There are waiting lists for classes and a chain store's clothing line for Māori language week sold out in minutes.

But they also belied a fraught debate about race roiling New Zealand, fueled by the polarized politics confronting many Western democracies and a backlash against the previous left-wing government. Last year, that sentiment brought to power fringe parties claiming that special treatment for Māori language and people — promised in the country's founding document and intended to address deep inequities — has created social division and unequal rights.

As a government comprising those groups and Luxon's ramps up initiatives stripping recognition of Māori from policy and law, analysts say they imperil New Zealand's standing on Indigenous matters.

"We've been world leaders and now that is being clawed back," said Ella Henry, a Māori entrepreneurship professor at Auckland University of Technology. "I don't know that this government quite understands the negative impact that is not only going to have on us politically but economically, because Māori culture is a tourism destination."

The relationship between Māori and the government — a coalition between Luxon's and Seymour's parties and a third, populist New Zealand First — promises to be "not just the most, but the only regressive one" in nearly two decades, said Ben Thomas, a political consultant who worked for a previous National government before Luxon led the party.

Their words echo others across the political spectrum who spoke to The Associated Press. They describe the way in which New Zealand has grown more racially fraught since the government took office last November, while at the same time public support for Māori culture has surged — a paradox rooted in the way the political system functions.

Without enough seats in Parliament to rule after an election that tipped Jacinda Ardern's Labour party from office, Luxon formed a government with two minor parties whose leaders — both Māori — capitalized on dissatisfaction about policies that favor Māori.

The two groups combined received less than 15% of the national vote, but extracted a series of concessions from Luxon amounting to "an onslaught of racist policy," said Janell Dymus-Turei, an expert in Māori health policy currently based at the Centers for American Indian and Alaska Native Health in Colorado.

Central to the groups' resentment is how the Treaty of Waitangi, New Zealand's founding document, has become integrated in law. It was signed in 1840, between Māori tribes and the British Crown which colonized New Zealand, but breaches of the rights promised to Māori and contested interpretations of the treaty since gave way to an Indigenous protest movement in the 1970s.

The activism prompted a Māori renaissance — immersion language pre-schools, billions of dollars in settlements between the government and tribes, and inclusion in law of the Treaty's principles, which promise Māori a say in decision-making and protection of their interests. Much of the legal recognition is

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due to be revised.

This week's order to public servants to stop targeting policy initiatives by race -- unless it was proven as the only contributing factor to a problem -- was insidious because it did not require a parliamentary vote, Dymus-Turei said.

"The government are not just using legislative measures, they're using their directive powers within their ministries" to repeal Māori rights, she added. Māori die on average seven years younger than non-Māori for women and eight years younger for men. They record higher rates of health issues — including cancers and respiratory and heart problems — that policies such as earlier screening and free doctors' visits have sought to address.

Speaking to reporters Friday, Seymour denied the directive was anti-Māori. Policy should be "based on equal rights for each and every citizen, no matter what your background," he said, adding that health issues where Māori disproportionately suffered could be explained by poverty or lack of housing, which affect other New Zealanders too — although Māori are disadvantaged in both.

Seymour has also secured a pledge that parliament will consider his proposed law drastically redefining the Treaty of Waitangi's principles. Luxon has promised the bill will not succeed, but it will be open for public submissions. Detractors warn this threatens months of racially charged debate about a matter that many New Zealanders consider long settled.

"The wording is so vague that if something like that were to ever go through, you would see decades of court cases and probably greater rights for Māori," said Thomas. "But none of that matters because the bill is a cipher for people to project all of their feelings and frustrations about the place of Māori in society."

A greater threat to Māori rights, Thomas said, was a concession won by New Zealand First, led by Winston Peters, to review and either repeal or replace all mentions of the Treaty of Waitangi in New Zealand law, with a few exceptions.

"This is not the prime ministership that Luxon expected or planned for or wanted," said Thomas, adding that ACT and New Zealand First had gained power unprecedented for minor parties.

Luxon on Tuesday promoted his government's record on Māori matters in Parliament, citing plans to improve literacy and numeracy and to move children out of emergency housing.

"When I actually think about what we're doing to rebuild this economy, giving tax relief for Māori families to support them in a cost of living crisis, we're a government focused on outcomes and we're improving them for Māori and non-Māori," he said.

Luxon took Māori language lessons ahead of an election campaign in which he pledged to change the names of public agencies — some have adopted Māori titles in recent years — back to English.

The turmoil has arisen as a fresh Māori political movement has come of age. Māori lawmakers — including Seymour and Peters — hold 33 of Parliament's 123 seats, six of them representing a Māori political party.

But Thomas said the previous left-wing government didn't do a good job of explaining its "completely defensible" policies advancing Māori rights, with the coronavirus pandemic and cost of living crisis amplifying the backlash.

Māori — who are nearly 20% of New Zealand's population and disproportionately young — were more ready to oppose challenges to their rights than generations before, said Henry.

"The last 55, 60 years of Māori protest transformed the country that I was born into 70 years ago," she said. "We've been galvanized into action, which I think is really positive."

Trump holds first event since an apparent assassination attempt while Harris does a rare interview

By STEVE PEOPLES, WILL WEISSERT and ADRIANA GOMEZ LICON Associated Press

FLINT, Mich. (AP) — Former President Donald Trump on Tuesday made his first public appearance since Sunday's second apparent assassination attempt against him, speaking to a crowd chanting "God bless Trump!" and "Fight, Fight, Fight" as U.S. Secret Service agents surrounded the stage to protect him.

"It's been a great experience," the Republican presidential nominee said in an evening town hall in Flint,

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Michigan, about holding events with thousands of supporters. But he also went on to call running for president “a dangerous business” akin to car racing or bull riding.

“Only consequential presidents get shot at,” he said.

Earlier in the day, Vice President Kamala Harris struck a measured tone, even steering clear of mentioning Trump by name in an interview with Black journalists that starkly contrasted with the former president’s own highly contentious appearance before the same group.

The two candidates briefly put their differences aside in a phone call Trump described as “very, very nice” even as crowds booed when he mentioned Harris by her first name. Harris said earlier in the day that she told Trump “there’s no place for political violence in our country.”

Both sides are ramping up campaigning with no changes to Trump’s calendar despite the apparent assassination attempt at one of his Florida golf courses, which has renewed accusations by Republicans that Democrats’ criticism against Trump is inspiring violent attacks. Democrats have accused Trump in the past for his long history of inflammatory campaign rhetoric and advocacy for jailing or prosecuting his political enemies. But Harris was treading more carefully in the aftermath of the latest incident.

Her session with the National Association of Black Journalists was one of the few extensive sit-down interviews Harris has done since replacing President Joe Biden atop the Democratic ticket in July. She repeatedly criticized Trump on issues including his handling of the COVID-19 pandemic and opposition to abortion access, but was careful to refer to him as the former president and in other ways that avoided naming him directly.

Trump re-upped his past retaliation threats against election workers, donors and others as he tries to stoke fears about the integrity of the upcoming 2024 election.

He posted Tuesday on his social media site, “Those involved in unscrupulous behavior will be sought out, caught, and prosecuted at levels, unfortunately, never seen before.”

The Michigan town hall was billed as focusing on the auto industry, a pillar of the battleground state. Trump alleged Democrats would undercut American car manufacturing by pushing for the adoption of electric vehicles and repeated false claims that Chinese automakers are building large factories across the border in Mexico to flood the U.S. with vehicles.

Trump has appearances later in the week in New York, Washington, D.C., and North Carolina.

Harris has her own stops in Washington as well as Michigan and Wisconsin in the coming days, with the two candidates overlapping in concentrating on the industrial Midwest, Pennsylvania and North Carolina — all swing areas that could decide an election expected to be exceedingly close.

Harris answered questions from three association journalists at a small, relatively quiet venue at the Philadelphia studios of public radio station WHYI. That was very different from Trump’s addressing the NABJ conference in Chicago in July, when he was antagonistic to the moderators and sparked an uproar by questioning the vice president’s racial identity.

Her manner was a departure from her campaign rallies, where Harris often receives some of her loudest applause by declaring that her professional background as a prosecutor means, “I know Donald Trump’s type.”

Pressed about reports of eroding support among Black male voters, Harris said she wasn’t “assuming I’m gonna have it because I’m Black.” She ducked a question about whether she’d support efforts by some congressional Democrats for reparations from the government to compensate descendants of slaves for years of unpaid labor by their ancestors. Biden has backed the idea of at least studying reparations.

So far, Biden and Harris have tried to avoid politics in their responses to Sunday’s incident, instead condemning political violence of all kinds. The president also urged Congress to increase funding to the Secret Service.

Trump has claimed, without evidence, that months of criticism against him by Harris and Biden, who call him a threat to American democracy, inspired the latest attack.

“I really believe that the rhetoric from the Democrats” is “making the bullets fly. And it’s very dangerous. Dangerous for them. It’s dangerous for both sides,” Trump said in an interview with The Washington Post.

Authorities say Ryan Wesley Routh camped outside the golf course in West Palm Beach, where Trump was playing Sunday, for nearly 12 hours with food and a rifle but fled without firing shots when a Secret Service agent spotted and shot at him. He was subsequently arrested as he drove on the highway.

Routh's past online posts suggest he has not been consistent about his politics in terms of supporting Democrats or Republicans. The attack came barely two months after Trump was wounded during a rally in Pennsylvania.

Trump also met Tuesday with sheriff's office deputies who activated the highway traffic stop that took Routh into custody.

Trump's running mate, Ohio Sen. JD Vance, said at a Georgia Faith & Freedom Coalition event on Monday that "it's popular on a lot of corners of the left to say that we have a both sides problem." But "no one has tried to kill Kamala Harris in the last couple of months, and two people now have tried to kill Donald Trump."

White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said during her briefing with reporters Tuesday that there should be zero tolerance for violence-inciting rhetoric. She bristled at the suggestion that Biden and Harris have stoked division by calling Trump a threat to democracy, saying there were concrete examples of the former president being that — such as when he helped incite an attack on the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021.

In response to Vance's comments, Jean-Pierre said, "When you have that type of language out there it's dangerous. It's dangerous because people look up to that particular national leader, and they listen to you." She said such comments open the door for "people to take you very seriously."

Dan Curry, 44, of Saginaw, Michigan, attended the town hall Tuesday and said he is worried about the prospect of more violence against Trump.

"They say the Republicans are the gun-crazed lunatics trying to shoot people, but you don't see us going after them," said Curry, while adding these attacks may mobilize more support for Trump.

"It energizes his base," he said. "How could it not?"

California governor signs laws to crack down on election deepfakes created by AI

By TRÂN NGUYỄN Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — California Gov. Gavin Newsom signed three bills Tuesday to crack down on the use of artificial intelligence to create false images or videos in political ads ahead of the 2024 election.

A new law, set to take effect immediately, makes it illegal to create and publish deepfakes related to elections 120 days before Election Day and 60 days thereafter. It also allows courts to stop distribution of the materials and impose civil penalties.

"Safeguarding the integrity of elections is essential to democracy, and it's critical that we ensure AI is not deployed to undermine the public's trust through disinformation — especially in today's fraught political climate," Newsom said in a statement. "These measures will help to combat the harmful use of deepfakes in political ads and other content, one of several areas in which the state is being proactive to foster transparent and trustworthy AI."

Large social media platforms are also required to remove the deceptive material under a first-in-the-nation law set to be enacted next year. Newsom also signed a bill requiring political campaigns to publicly disclose if they are running ads with materials altered by AI.

The governor signed the bills to loud applause during a conversation with Salesforce CEO Marc Benioff at an event hosted by the major software company during its annual conference in San Francisco.

The new laws reaffirm California's position as a leader in regulating AI in the U.S., especially in combating election deepfakes. The state was the first in the U.S. to ban manipulated videos and pictures related to elections in 2019. Measures in technology and AI proposed by California lawmakers have been used as blueprints for legislators across the country, industry experts said.

With AI supercharging the threat of election disinformation worldwide, lawmakers across the country have raced to address the issue over concerns the manipulated materials could erode the public's trust

in what they see and hear.

"With fewer than 50 days until the general election, there is an urgent need to protect against misleading, digitally-altered content that can interfere with the election," Assemblymember Gail Pellerin, author of the law banning election deepfakes, said in a statement. "California is taking a stand against the manipulative use of deepfake technology to deceive voters."

Newsom's decision followed his vow in July to crack down on election deepfakes in response to a video posted by X-owner Elon Musk featuring altered images of Vice President and Democratic presidential nominee Kamala Harris.

The new California laws come the same day as members of Congress unveiled federal legislation aiming to stop election deepfakes. The bill would give the Federal Election Commission the power to regulate the use of AI in elections in the same way it has regulated other political misrepresentation for decades. The FEC has started to consider such regulations after outlawing AI-generated robocalls aimed to discourage voters in February.

Newsom has touted California as an early adopter as well as regulator of AI, saying the state could soon deploy generative AI tools to address highway congestion and provide tax guidance, even as his administration considers new rules against AI discrimination in hiring practices.

He also signed two other bills Tuesday to protect Hollywood performers from unauthorized AI use without their consent.

What to know about the threats in Springfield, Ohio, after false claims about Haitian immigrants

By MICHAEL RUBINKAM and JULIE CARR SMYTH Associated Press

SPRINGFIELD, Ohio (AP) — A small Ohio city has been inundated with hoax bomb threats since last week's presidential debate, when former President Donald Trump falsely accused members of Springfield's Haitian community of abducting and eating cats and dogs.

Trump's running mate, Ohio Sen. JD Vance, has amplified debunked internet rumors about Haitian migrants as the Republican ticket criticizes the immigration policies of President Joe Biden's administration that are supported by Trump's Democratic opponent, Vice President Kamala Harris. City officials acknowledge growing pains from the influx of some 15,000 Haitian immigrants, but say there's no evidence to support the claim they are consuming anyone's pets.

More than 30 bomb threats have been made against schools, government buildings and city officials' homes since last week, forcing evacuations and closures. Springfield also canceled its annual celebration of diversity, arts and culture in response to the threats, and on Tuesday, state police were deployed to city schools.

Here are some things to know about the situation in Springfield:

Who's behind the hoax threats?

Foreign actors, primarily. That's according to Ohio's governor, Republican Mike DeWine, who revealed that most of the threats are coming from overseas. The governor's office says a criminal investigation by multiple law enforcement agencies determined the "vast majority" of the threats were international in origin. Officials did not provide more information on how investigators determined they came from a foreign country, nor would DeWine reveal the name of the country.

What's being done?

DeWine sent dozens of members of the Ohio State Highway Patrol to all 18 city schools, where sweeps will be conducted twice a day to prevent further disruption and help reassure parents and students the buildings are safe. Even with the increased police presence, though, many parents still kept their kids home from school on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, security cameras have been stationed at strategic spots in the city, and a bomb-sniffing dog was sent to Springfield and will be available round-the-clock.

And DeWine pledged \$2.5 million over two years to increase support for primary health care. The state

highway patrol is also helping local law enforcement with traffic enforcement. DeWine said many Haitians are inexperienced drivers and are unfamiliar with U.S. traffic laws.

How is the city responding?

Springfield never wanted the spotlight — not in this way.

On Tuesday, city officials said that misinformation and falsehoods about Haitian immigrants have sowed fear and division, disrupted learning and cost taxpayer dollars. In a statement, they begged public figures, community members and the media to “move beyond divisive rhetoric and instead work toward fostering unity, understanding and respect.” The statement did not mention Trump or Vance by name.

Springfield Mayor Rob Rue has said the immigrant influx is straining police, hospitals and schools. He has also criticized the federal government, saying the city asked for help months ago. But he called on national leaders Tuesday to “temper their words and speak truth.”

Why did so many Haitians move to Springfield?

Jobs and word of mouth.

Springfield shed manufacturing jobs and its population decreased significantly as a result toward the end of the last century. But the city has made a concerted effort to lure employers and Haitians immigrants have helped meet rising demand for labor in factories and warehouses. Word spread, and Haitians began arriving in greater numbers over the last few years.

Haitians in Springfield and elsewhere came to the U.S. to flee violence in their home country. Many Haitians are here under a federal program called Temporary Protected Status, which allows them to temporarily live and work in the U.S. because conditions are considered too dangerous for them to return to Haiti.

What are Haitian immigrants saying?

Members of the Haitian community say they felt uneasy even before Trump and Vance picked up and amplified the lies about pet-eating, as longtime residents chafed at the new arrivals’ impact on jobs, housing and traffic.

“Some of them are talking about living in fear. Some of them are scared for their life,” Rose-Thamar Joseph said last week at Springfield’s Haitian Community Help and Support Center.

At a church service on Sunday, Mia Perez said her daughter was evacuated from school twice last week.

“Kids in school are being asked by other kids: ‘How does the dog taste? How does the cat taste?’” Perez said. “She’s asking, ‘Are we the kind of Haitians who eat this kind of stuff? Is it true? What’s happening?’”

“This is a conversation that I was not ready to have with my daughter,” Perez said. “I felt disrespected of our culture.”

Sean ‘Diddy’ Combs jailed by judge after sex trafficking indictment

By LARRY NEUMEISTER, MICHAEL R. SISAK and JENNIFER PELTZ Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Sean “Diddy” Combs headed to jail Tuesday to await trial in a federal sex trafficking case that accuses him of presiding over a sordid empire of sexual crimes protected by blackmail and shocking acts of violence.

The music mogul is charged with racketeering conspiracy and sex trafficking. The indictment against him lists allegations that go back to 2008.

He’s accused of inducing female victims and male sex workers into drugged-up, sometimes dayslong sexual performances dubbed “Freak Offs.” The indictment also refers obliquely to an attack on his former girlfriend, the R&B singer Cassie, that was captured on video.

“Not guilty,” Combs told a court, standing to speak after expressionlessly listening to the allegations with his uncuffed hands folded in his lap.

After U.S. Magistrate Judge Robyn Tarnofsky declined to grant him bail, Combs took a long swig from a water bottle, then was led out of court, turning toward family members in the audience as he went.

“Mr. Combs is a fighter. He’s going to fight this to the end. He’s innocent,” his lawyer, Marc Agnifilo, said after court. He plans to appeal the bail decision.

The Bad Boy Records founder is accused of sexually abusing and using physical force toward women

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and getting his personal assistants, security and household staff to help him hide it all. Prosecutors say he also tried to bribe and intimidate witnesses and victims to keep them quiet.

"Simply put, he is a serial abuser and a serial obstructor," Assistant U.S. Attorney Emily Johnson told a court.

Agnifilo acknowledged Combs was "not a perfect person," saying he'd used drugs and had been in "toxic relationships" but was getting treatment and therapy.

"The evidence in this case is extremely problematic," the attorney told the court.

He maintained that the case stemmed from one long-term, consensual relationship that faltered amid infidelity. He didn't name the woman, but the details matched those of Combs' decade-long involvement with Cassie, whose legal name is Casandra Ventura.

The "Freak Offs," Agnifilo contended, were an expansion of that relationship, and not coercive.

"Is it sex trafficking? Not if everybody wants to be there," Agnifilo said, arguing that authorities were intruding on his client's private life.

Prosecutors said in court papers that they had interviewed more than 50 victims and witnesses and expect the number to grow. They said they would use financial, travel and billing records, electronic data and communications and videos of the "Freak Offs" to prove their case.

Combs was arrested Monday in Manhattan, roughly six months after federal authorities raided his luxurious homes in Los Angeles and Miami.

A conviction on every charge would require at least 15 years in prison, with the possibility of a life sentence.

The indictment describes Combs as the head of a criminal enterprise that engaged or attempted to engage in sex trafficking, forced labor, interstate transportation for purposes of prostitution, drug offenses, kidnapping, arson, bribery and obstruction of justice.

Combs and his associates wielded his "power and prestige" to intimidate and lure women into his orbit, "often under the pretense of a romantic relationship," according to the indictment.

It says he then would use force, threats and coercion to get the women to engage with male sex workers in the "Freak Offs" — "elaborate and produced sex performances" that Combs arranged and recorded, creating dozens of videos.

He ensured their participation by procuring and providing drugs, controlling their careers, leveraging his financial support and using intimidation and violence, according to the indictment. It said his employees facilitated "Freak Offs" by taking care of tasks like travel and hotel arrangements and stocking them with such supplies as drugs and baby oil.

The events could last for days, and Combs and victims would often receive IV fluids to recover from the exertion and drug use, the indictment said.

During the searches of Combs' homes earlier this year, law enforcement seized narcotics, videos of the performances and more than 1,000 bottles of baby oil and lubricant, according to prosecutors. They said agents also seized firearms and ammunition, including three AR-15s with defaced serial numbers in his bedroom closet in Miami.

Combs' lawyer said his client didn't own the guns, noting that he employs a security company.

The indictment says Combs choked, shoved, hit and kicked people, causing injuries that often took days or weeks to heal. His employees and associates sometimes kept victims from leaving or tracked down those who tried, the indictment said.

It alleges that Combs used explicit recordings as "collateral" to ensure the women's continued obedience and silence. He also exerted control over victims by promising career opportunities, providing and threatening to withhold financial support, dictating how they looked, monitoring their health records and controlling where they lived, according to the indictment.

As the threat of criminal charges loomed, Combs and his associates pressured witnesses and victims to stay silent, offering bribes and supplying false narratives of what happened, the indictment says.

In a court filing, prosecutors accused Combs and an unidentified co-conspirator of kidnapping someone at gunpoint in December 2011 in order to facilitate a break-in at another person's home. Two weeks later, prosecutors wrote, Combs set fire to someone's vehicle by slicing open its convertible top and dropping

in a Molotov cocktail.

All of this, prosecutors say, was happening behind the facade of Combs' global music, lifestyle and clothing business.

Combs was recognized as one of the most influential figures in hip-hop before a flood of allegations emerged over the past year.

In November, Ventura filed a lawsuit saying he had beaten and raped her for years. She accused Combs of coercing her, and others, into unwanted sex in drug-fueled settings.

The suit was settled in one day, but months later, CNN aired hotel security footage showing Combs punching and kicking Ventura and throwing her on a floor. After the video aired, Combs apologized, saying, "I was disgusted when I did it."

The indictment refers to the attack, without naming Ventura, and says Combs tried to bribe a hotel security staffer to stay mum about it.

Douglas Wigdor, a lawyer for Ventura, declined to comment Tuesday.

Combs and his attorneys denied similar allegations made by others in a string of lawsuits.

The AP does not typically name people who say they have been sexually abused unless they come forward publicly, as Ventura did.

A key employee says the Titan sub tragedy could have been prevented

By PATRICK WHITTLE Associated Press

A key employee who labeled a doomed experimental submersible unsafe prior to its last, fatal voyage testified Tuesday that the tragedy could have been prevented if a federal safety agency had investigated his complaint.

David Lochridge, OceanGate's former operations director, said he felt let down by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's decision not to follow through on the complaint.

"I believe that if OSHA had attempted to investigate the seriousness of the concerns I raised on multiple occasions, this tragedy may have been prevented," he said while speaking before a commission trying to determine what caused the Titan to implode en route to the wreckage of the Titanic last year, killing all five on board. "As a seafarer, I feel deeply disappointed by the system that is meant to protect not only seafarers but the general public as well."

Lochridge said during testimony that eight months after he filed an OSHA complaint, a caseworker told him the agency had not begun investigating it yet and there were 11 cases ahead of his. By then, OceanGate was suing Lochridge and he had filed a countersuit.

About 10 months after he filed the complaint, he decided to walk away. The case was closed and both lawsuits were dropped.

"I gave them nothing, they gave me nothing," he said of OceanGate.

OSHA officials did not immediately respond to a request for comment Tuesday.

Earlier in the day, Lochridge said he frequently clashed with the company's co-founder and felt the company was committed only to making money.

Lochridge was one of the most anticipated witnesses to appear before a commission. His testimony echoed that of other former employees Monday, one of whom described OceanGate head Stockton Rush as volatile and difficult to work with.

"The whole idea behind the company was to make money," Lochridge said. "There was very little in the way of science."

Rush was among the five people who died in the implosion. OceanGate owned the Titan and brought it on several dives to the Titanic going back to 2021.

Lochridge's testimony began a day after other witnesses painted a picture of a troubled company that was impatient to get its unconventionally designed craft into the water. The accident set off a worldwide debate about the future of private undersea exploration.

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Lochridge joined the company in the mid-2010s as a veteran engineer and submersible pilot and said he quickly came to feel he was being used to lend the company scientific credibility. He said he felt the company was selling him as part of the project "for people to come up and pay money," and that did not sit well with him.

"I was, I felt, a show pony," he said. "I was made by the company to stand up there and do talks. It was difficult. I had to go up and do presentations. All of it."

Lochridge referenced a 2018 report in which he raised safety issues about OceanGate operations. He said with all of the safety issues he saw "there was no way I was signing off on this."

Asked whether he had confidence in the way the Titan was being built, he said: "No confidence whatsoever."

Employee turnover was very high at the time, said Lochridge, and leadership dismissed his concerns because they were more focused on "bad engineering decisions" and a desire to get to the Titanic as quickly as possible and start making money. He eventually was fired after raising the safety concerns, he said.

"I didn't want to lose my job. I wanted to do the Titanic. But to dive it safely. It was on my bucket list, too," he said.

OceanGate, based in Washington state, suspended its operations after the implosion.

OceanGate's former engineering director, Tony Nissen, kicked off Monday's testimony, telling investigators he felt pressured to get the vessel ready to dive and refused to pilot it for a journey several years before Titan's last trip. Nissen worked on a prototype hull that predated the Titanic expeditions.

"I'm not getting in it," Nissen said he told Rush.

OceanGate's former finance and human resources director, Bonnie Carl, testified Monday that Lochridge had characterized the Titan as "unsafe."

Coast Guard officials noted at the start of the hearing that the submersible had not been independently reviewed, as is standard practice. That and Titan's unusual design subjected it to scrutiny in the undersea exploration community.

During the submersible's final dive on June 18, 2023, the crew lost contact after an exchange of texts about the Titan's depth and weight as it descended. The support ship Polar Prince then sent repeated messages asking if the Titan could still see the ship on its onboard display.

One of the last messages from Titan's crew to Polar Prince before the submersible imploded stated, "all good here," according to a visual re-creation presented earlier in the hearing.

When the submersible was reported overdue, rescuers rushed ships, planes and other equipment to an area about 435 miles (700 kilometers) south of St. John's, Newfoundland. Wreckage of the Titan was subsequently found on the ocean floor about 330 yards (300 meters) off the bow of the Titanic, Coast Guard officials said.

Scheduled to appear later in the hearing are OceanGate co-founder Guillermo Sohnlein and former scientific director, Steven Ross, according to a list compiled by the Coast Guard. Numerous guard officials, scientists, and government and industry officials are also expected to testify. The U.S. Coast Guard subpoenaed witnesses who were not government employees, said Coast Guard spokesperson Melissa Leake.

Among those not on the hearing witness list is Rush's widow, Wendy Rush, the company's communications director. Lochridge said Wendy Rush had an active role in the company when he was there.

Asked about Wendy Rush's absence, Leake said the Coast Guard does not comment on the reasons for not calling specific individuals to a particular hearing during ongoing investigations. She said it's common for a Marine Board of Investigation to "hold multiple hearing sessions or conduct additional witness depositions for complex cases."

OceanGate has no full-time employees at this time but will be represented by an attorney during the hearing, the company said in a statement. The company said it has been fully cooperating with the Coast Guard and NTSB investigations since they began.

The ongoing Marine Board of Investigation is the highest level of marine casualty investigation conducted by the Coast Guard. When the hearing concludes, recommendations will be submitted to the Coast Guard's commandant. The National Transportation Safety Board is also conducting an investigation.

'Firehose' storm hits part of North Carolina and scientists see climate change

By JEFFREY COLLINS and ISABELLA O'MALLEY Associated Press

The Carolinas braced for a storm that forecasters warned could bring heavy rain — as much as 6 to 8 inches in some spots. But one narrow band got a “firehose” that dumped as much as 20 inches in a so-called 1,000-year flood that shocked many with its intensity.

The storm that left homes flooded, cars submerged and schools closed Tuesday in parts of North Carolina wasn't really a surprise to scientists who have long said that such rainfalls are one marker of climate change.

“Data shows one of the strongest relationships between climate change and precipitation is that as the atmosphere warms, the capacity to hold water increases. Therefore we see more intense rainfall in a shorter period of time,” said Andrew Kruczkiwicz, senior researcher at the Columbia Climate School at Columbia University.

Monday's deluge centered on Carolina Beach south of Wilmington, where more than 18 inches (46 centimeters) of rain fell in 12 hours and almost 21 overall. That much rain qualifies as a 1,000-year flood expected only once in that length of time, meteorologists at the National Weather Service office in Wilmington said.

Some areas were hit particularly hard as the storm took a narrow path over the region, “causing a bit of a firehose effect,” NWS meteorologist Lauren Warner said. The agency's forecasts allowed for “locally higher” amounts, but those weren't close to what eventually fell.

“If that had moved just a little to the left or continued to the left, that would have mitigated some of the totals that we saw or perhaps spread them out over a wider area,” said Warner. The worst flooding occurred over parts of just two counties, her colleague Tim Armstrong said.

Ocean Isle Beach, just a little over 30 miles (48 kilometers) from Carolina Beach picked up less than 4 inches (10 centimeters) of rain.

Carolina Beach Mayor Lynn Barbee said the 21 inches that fell on his town was impossible to fully prepare for even in a place accustomed to tropical downpours.

“I don't think I've ever seen it rain so hard and for so long,” said Barbee, who has lived on the coast for most of his life. “Not rain bands that get harder and let up or a front moving through. It just sat on top of us.”

The storm system was known as Potential Tropical Cyclone No. 8, but it never organized enough to become the eighth named tropical storm of the season.

The lack of a name added to the difficulty, Barbee said, since people pay more attention to named storms or hurricanes. Tourists were still arriving for beach vacations Monday at the height of the deluge. One family from Pennsylvania lost their van to the floodwaters and are in a shelter instead of their vacation rental, the mayor said.

“We've developed a communication dialogue. We communicate cones of uncertainty, expected path, time of arrival, strength on the Saffir-Simpson scale. People know what to expect. But suddenly we're having storms that don't fit on these scales,” Barbee said.

Carolina Beach is still cleaning up, and the mayor expects things to be back to normal by the weekend. But town officials are going to keep trying to figure out how to plan for heavy rain like they plan for 18 inches of water to come in from the ocean during a hurricane's storm surge.

“A foot-and-a-half that falls out of the sky instead of from the ocean -- where does it go?” Barbee said. “We're finding it in neighborhoods that have never flooded. It's falling water and not rising water.”

The flash flooding closed dozens of roads in Brunswick County at North Carolina's southeast tip, including U.S. Highway 17, which is the main coastal route. Floodwaters swamped the highway at several points for most of the day, trapping some drivers on high ground that became an island.

Emergency workers brought food and water to people as they waited for the waters to recede, Bruns-

wick County emergency officials said. No deaths were reported but dozens of roads in the county were damaged and many washed out.

Gov. Roy Cooper signed an executive order Tuesday declaring a state of emergency for Brunswick and three other southeastern counties, which the governor said will make additional assistance available for the region.

It wasn't the region's first historic flood by any measure. The same area has seen four other floods of a lifetime in the past 25 years from Hurricane Floyd in 1999, unnamed storms in 2010 and 2015, and the benchmark flood with 30 inches of rain from Hurricane Florence in 2018.

The rain from the system had moved into southeast Virginia on Tuesday. Along North Carolina's Outer Banks, the storm closed vulnerable coastal highway North Carolina 12 on Ocracoke Island and threatened several homes in Rodanthe, where erosion and rising sea levels have destroyed more than a half-dozen beachfront homes this decade.

The Atlantic hurricane season continues through the end of November.

In an updated hurricane outlook last month, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration was still predicting a highly active season thanks to near-record sea surface temperatures and the possibility of La Nina. Emergency management officials have urged people to stay prepared.

Elsewhere in the Atlantic, Gordon remained a tropical depression as it swirled through open ocean waters. Gordon could either dissolve in upcoming days or strengthen back into a tropical storm, forecasters said.

Overseas threats hit the Ohio city where Trump and Vance lied about Haitians eating pets

By PATRICK AFTOORA ORSAGOS and MICHAEL RUBINKAM Associated Press

SPRINGFIELD, Ohio (AP) — Ohio stationed state police at Springfield schools Tuesday in response to a rash of bomb threats — the vast majority that officials said came from overseas — after former President Donald Trump and his running mate, Ohio Sen. JD Vance falsely said legal Haitian immigrants in the small city were eating dogs and cats.

Schools, government buildings and elected officials' homes in Springfield were among the targets of more than 30 hoax threats made last week that forced evacuations and closures. Two more schools had to be evacuated on Monday, and the high school was threatened on Tuesday. Republican Gov. Mike DeWine said a foreign actor was largely responsible, but he declined to name the country.

Even with dozens of Ohio State Highway Patrol officers fanning out to protect the Springfield City School District's 18 schools, many parents opted to keep their children at home. At one elementary school, some 200 students were absent Tuesday out of a population of 500.

"There's still a high level of fear due to these unfounded threats and hoaxes that have marred our existence really for going on a week now," said Robert Hill, chief executive officer of the Springfield City School District, appearing at a news conference with DeWine.

Two highway patrol officers have been assigned to each school, a protocol that will be continued "as long as it is necessary," DeWine said.

"We do not believe there is a real threat out there, but we are certainly not going to take any chances. And we want parents to be assured that their children can be kids and can go to school and can learn," he said.

State police were visible at a middle school earlier Tuesday, with students dropped off as normal.

Thousands of Haitian immigrants have settled in recent years in the predominantly white, blue-collar city of about 60,000, about 45 miles (70 kilometers) from the state capital of Columbus, where they have found work in factories and warehouses that had been struggling to fill job openings.

The sudden influx has strained schools, health care facilities and city services and driven up the cost of housing — and became a major political issue after Trump amplified debunked internet rumors about pet-eating during last week's presidential debate. Vance has repeated the false claims.

"We did not have threats seven days ago. We did not have these concerns seven days ago. We did not

have these hundreds and hundreds of thousands of dollars spent in Springfield and from the state of Ohio in support seven days ago. We do today," Springfield Mayor Rob Rue said Tuesday.

Rue did not mention Trump or Vance by name, but called on national leaders to "temper their words and speak truth."

"That's what Springfield is asking. We need peace. We need help, not hate," he said.

Vice President Kamala Harris, answering questions at a forum for Black journalists in Philadelphia on Tuesday, said her heart breaks for Springfield. She said the inflammatory rhetoric about Haitian immigrants is "exhausting and it's harmful and it's hateful and and grounded in some age-old stuff that we should not have the tolerance for."

Vance has not backed down, writing on the social media platform X that "citizens are telling us that there are problems" in Springfield and that he has repeatedly condemned the threats. He accused Harris of ignoring the residents' legitimate concerns and trying to stifle debate.

DeWine's spokesperson, Dan Tierney, said Tuesday that "the vast majority" of the bomb threats have come from foreign countries." He said a criminal investigation by multiple law enforcement agencies yielded information on the origin of the threats.

Tierney was not more specific on how investigators determined they came from a foreign country, nor would he reveal the name of the country, saying that could encourage additional threats.

"These are largely foreign actors, not folks in the community or another part of the United States," he said. "We think it's useful in part because it shows that it's, you know, false, that it's safe to send your kids to school. And we're providing extra patrol support to make sure people feel safe at school."

The Secret Service again faces scrutiny after another gunman targets Trump

By REBECCA SANTANA Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — For the second time in more than two months, the Secret Service that protects the highest echelon of American leaders is under scrutiny — this time after a gunman hid in the shrubs along the fence of former President Donald Trump's golf course for 12 hours.

The man didn't get a shot off, but critics question how he could be just several hundred yards away from Trump — especially after the Republican presidential candidate's security was beefed up after his near-death experience in July.

Biden administration officials praised the agency's response, and former Secret Service agents say there are key differences between what unfolded Sunday and the security lapses at an outdoor rally in Butler, Pennsylvania, when a gunman climbed onto an unsecured roof nearby and opened fire, clipping Trump's ear and leaving a spectator dead.

Authorities say Ryan Wesley Routh camped with food and a rifle just outside the 27-hole Trump International Golf Course in West Palm Beach, Florida, where the former president was playing Sunday. A Secret Service agent ahead of Trump spotted the rifle's muzzle poking through the fence and opened fire. Routh fled and was later apprehended.

It's long been known to law enforcement that places along the edge of the property leave Trump visible to those behind the fence, and some have questioned why it was not protected. But a sprawling golf course poses specific challenges, especially for a last-minute round, even with Trump's bolstered security, former Secret Service agents say.

"A 400-acre golf course with miles of fence line is breachable. And the systems put in place to mitigate those threats worked. That's not to say they couldn't do more. But there are limits to what is possible," said Paul Eckloff, a retired Secret Service agent who served on details protecting three presidents during his 23-year career.

The Secret Service is trying to protect a growing number of high-profile people, from presidents to visiting dignitaries, in a vitriolic political environment. President Joe Biden and some Republicans are pressing for more resources for the agency still facing several investigations and whose director resigned after the

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first attempt on Trump's life.

Acting Secret Service Director Ronald Rowe Jr. said Sunday's golf game was not on a formal schedule or advertised ahead of time. That means agents may find out about it the day before or even minutes before it happens.

Rowe emphasized that the gunman never had a line of sight on the former president and that security worked as it should. He said the edge of the property wasn't monitored ahead of time because Trump "wasn't supposed to have gone there in the first place." Rowe described how agents spread out in front of and behind Trump, looking for threats.

Trump and his campaign have routinely praised the agents protecting him while expressing concerns about the agency more broadly, including that his detail isn't large enough given the threat level.

But some have raised questions. During an interview Monday on Sean Hannity's Fox News show, Trump's son Eric questioned how the gunman was able to stay in that location for so long without being detected.

"Those agents on the ground, they are remarkable," he said. "But there is a breakdown."

Rowe a day earlier said, "The agent's hypervigilance and the detail's swift action was textbook."

It's not possible for the Secret Service to shut down all traffic around the golf course, said Eckloff, who protected Trump while he was president, including at two of his golf courses in Florida. This course is in the middle of the city and taking such a step would have huge effects on residents.

Trump loves to golf and owns three courses in Florida. Trump International is closest to his Mar-a-Lago home and is a place he likes to go with friends. While Trump was president, news photographers were often able to capture images of him on the green by finding gaps in the shrubbery.

Security around Trump was dramatically beefed up after the July shooting. Trump now speaks from behind a bulletproof glass enclosure at outdoor rallies, and long guns are often spotted near locations where he's staying.

The agency doesn't release specific information about his protection but Secret Service spokesman Anthony Guglielmi said Trump's detail now includes countersurveillance, a countersniper and counterassault resources. Before the Pennsylvania shooting, some of those assets were used depending on the event but now they're permanently part of his detail, Guglielmi said.

During a POLITICO event Tuesday, Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas praised the response Sunday and said Trump's security is now "quite approximate" to that of Biden. Many Republicans doubt that's true.

Anthony Cangelosi, a former Secret Service agent who is now a lecturer at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, said the close call shows there's a need for more personnel to protect Trump and they could have been used to secure the course's perimeter.

"That visible presence is what you want to deter any actors from saying, 'Oh, I can do this today,'" Cangelosi said.

He commended the agent who spotted the muzzle but said there's always a chance they could have missed it.

The Palm Beach County sheriff said the entire golf course would have been lined with law enforcement if Trump were president, but because he is not, "security is limited to the areas that the Secret Service deems possible."

Following the second apparent assassination attempt, Biden said the Secret Service needs more resources and called on Congress to help. Rowe said the agency had "immediate needs" and that he's talking to Congress about funding.

Some lawmakers have said they're willing to consider it. Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham says money alone won't fix the problems but that he hears from Secret Service agents that "the work hours are awful. You'll never convince me that more people won't help."

Sen. Susan Collins, the ranking Republican on the Senate Appropriations Committee, said lawmakers need more details, particularly because the Secret Service has said a lack of resources was not the reason for the security failures that led up to the first attempt.

Even if new money is approved soon, it can take up to 18 months to bring on a new Secret Service staffer, retired supervisory Secret Service agent Bobby McDonald said. The agency may want to transfer more personnel from investigative work to its protective side, he said.

"There is no quick fix," said McDonald, now a criminal justice lecturer at the University of New Haven. He noted that temporarily bringing in people from outside the agency to help can come with its own challenges because they don't regularly do protective work.

Rowe stressed Monday that it wasn't just a matter of more overtime for staff, who he said were "redlining."

Former agents also question where staff would come from. With all of the political vitriol and the immediate blame, Eckloff said he's worried about the effect of such animosity of those whose job it is to step in front of a bullet.

"They're worthy of trust and confidence, but they need help. Constructive criticism is absolutely necessary," he said. "But just demanding firing or say that they're failures doesn't make anyone safer or increase national security."

Dolphins place Tua Tagovailoa on injured reserve after latest concussion

By ALANIS THAMES AP Sports Writer

MIAMI GARDENS, Fla. (AP) — The Miami Dolphins placed Tua Tagovailoa on injured reserve Tuesday after the quarterback was diagnosed with his third concussion in two years.

Tagovailoa will be sidelined for at least four games. He will be eligible to return in Week 8 when the Dolphins host Arizona, but has to complete a series of tests and assessments required by the NFL's concussion protocol before he can return to the field.

Tagovailoa was hurt last Thursday night when he collided with Buffalo defensive back Damar Hamlin. He ran for a first down and then initiated the contact by lowering his shoulder into Hamlin instead of sliding.

Players from both teams immediately motioned that Tagovailoa was hurt, and as he lay on the turf the quarterback exhibited some signs typically associated with a traumatic brain injury. He remained down on the field for a couple of minutes, got to his feet and walked to the sideline. The Dolphins diagnosed him with a concussion a few minutes later.

Coach Mike McDaniel has since cautioned against speculation on the quarterback's future, stressing that he's more focused on Tagovailoa getting healthy than what this latest concussion means for the team or for his career. Tagovailoa this week began the process of consulting neurologists about his health amid reports that he has no plans to retire.

Others around the NFL have offered their opinions on Tagovailoa's future, including Raiders coach Antonio Pierce, who suggested he should retire.

"As far as Tua's career is concerned, I think it's an utmost priority of mine for Tua to speak on Tua's career," McDaniel said Monday. "Reports are reports. As far as I'm concerned, I'm just worried about the human being and where that's at day to day. I'll let Tua be the champion of his own career."

McDaniel said Tagovailoa was at the team's practice facility on Monday, greeting teammates and working with trainers.

"He's doing good, man. Talked to him, he's in good spirits," receiver Jaylen Waddle said Monday. "(He's) got the team in good spirits and everybody praying for him and hoping (for his) health."

Head injuries have become a familiar, scary occurrence throughout Tagovailoa's career.

In a September 2022 game against the Bills, he took a hit from linebacker Matt Milano, which caused him to slam to the ground. He appeared disoriented afterward and stumbled as he tried to get to his feet. He was cleared to return to that game and later said it was a back injury that caused the stumble. He was not diagnosed with a concussion.

Four days later, he got hit again during a Thursday night game at Cincinnati in which he was briefly knocked unconscious and was taken off the field on a stretcher. As he lay on the turf, his fingers appeared

to display the "fencing response," an involuntary motion typically associated with a brain injury. That time, he was placed in the concussion protocol.

The NFL and the players' union made changes to the concussion protocol after those two incidents with Tagovailoa. Players who have problems with balance or stability are now prohibited from returning to a game.

Tagovailoa briefly considered retirement, but instead returned and studied ways to better protect himself on the field, including taking jiu-jitsu classes ahead of the 2023 season.

Tagovailoa has said he spoke to numerous neurologists who told him they did not believe he would be more susceptible to head injuries than any other player moving forward, nor would he be at a higher risk for chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE), the brain disease associated with repeated blows to the head. He was also diagnosed with a concussion while in college at Alabama.

With Tagovailoa sidelined, the Dolphins will go with backup Skylar Thompson when play at Seattle on Sunday. Miami also signed Tyler Huntley off the Ravens' practice squad.

Harris condemns Trump's rhetoric, says voters should make sure he 'can't have that microphone again'

By MATT BROWN and DARLENE SUPERVILLE Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Vice President Kamala Harris on Tuesday decried Republican Donald Trump for inflammatory rhetoric about migrants in Springfield, Ohio, and on other topics, saying voters should make sure he "can't have that microphone again."

Sitting down for a rare extended campaign interview Tuesday with a trio of journalists from the National Association of Black Journalists, Harris said her heart breaks after threats of violence have disrupted the city following comments amplified by Trump and his running mate alleging, without evidence, that immigrants are kidnapping and consuming people's pets.

Two days after Secret Service agents foiled an apparent assassination attempt on Trump, who blamed Democratic rhetoric for the latest threat to his life, Harris said that "there are far too many people in our country right now who are not feeling safe." She referenced the threats to immigrants, but also the conservative Project 2025 blueprint for the next Republican administration and a GOP-led effort to restrict abortion access.

"Not everybody has Secret Service," she said. "Members of the LGBTQ community don't feel safe right now, immigrants or people with an immigrant background don't feel safe right now. Women don't feel safe right now."

Harris said she personally has confidence in the Secret Service and feels safe under their protection. She spoke briefly with Trump on Tuesday to express her gratitude that he was safe, but in the interview said his rhetoric should be disqualifying.

"When you have that kind of microphone in front of you, you really ought to understand at a deep level that your words have meaning," Harris said, without mentioning Trump by name. "Let's turn the page and chart a new way forward and say you can't have that microphone again."

Harris said the Republican attacks on the city and migrants there were "lies that are grounded in tropes that are age old."

The sedate interview in Philadelphia stood in contrast to former President Donald Trump's appearance before the same organization just a month ago, which turned contentious over matters of race and other issues.

The Trump interview opened a chapter in the campaign in which the Republican candidate repeatedly questioned Harris' racial identity, baselessly claiming that she had only belatedly "turned Black" at some point in her professional career. Trump has since repeatedly questioned Harris' racial identity on the campaign trail and during the September presidential debate.

Harris, the daughter of a Jamaican father and an Indian mother, has repeatedly dismissed Trump's remarks as "the same old show." During her September debate with Trump, she said it was a "tragedy"

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that he had "attempted to use race to divide the American people."

The vice president insisted she is working to earn the vote of Black men and not taking any constituency for granted. Black male voters are traditionally one of the most consistently Democratic-leaning demographics in the nation. But Republicans have tried to make inroads, while Democrats worry about flagging enthusiasm at the polls.

"I think it's very important to not operate from the assumption that Black men are in anybody's pocket," Harris said. "Black men are like any other voting group. You gotta earn their vote, so I'm working to earn the vote, not assuming I'm gonna have it because I'm Black"

Harris declined to say if she supported reparations for descendants of slaves, but said, "we need to speak truth about the generational impact of our history in terms of the generational impact of slavery, the generational impact of red lining." She said expressed openness to studying the question "to figure out exactly what we need to do," but said her focus was on building economic opportunity.

In Trump's interview with NABJ, he lambasted the moderators and drew boos and groans from the audience at times. The interview also sparked debate within the NABJ convention itself, which operates both as a networking and communal space for Black professionals in media as well as a newsmaking event.

As with Trump's appearance, the audience was made up of NABJ members and college students, but the tenor was markedly different. Where Trump called the reporters interviewing him "rude," "nasty" and denounced their questions as "horrible," Harris referred to the reporters who pressed her as "esteemed journalists."

The crowd was inaudible throughout the Tuesday interview with Harris. In July, Trump's comments were often met with laughter, shock and confusion from the room, which largely consisted of student journalists and media professionals outside political news.

Trump, his running mate, Ohio Sen. JD Vance, and other Republicans have criticized Harris for largely avoiding media interviews or interacting on the record with reporters who cover her campaign events. She and her running mate, Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz, gave a joint interview to CNN last month. Her campaign recently said she would be doing more local media, and last week she sat for her first solo television interview since becoming the Democratic nominee, taking questions from a Philadelphia station.

Asked whether Americans are better off today than four years ago when she and President Joe Biden entered office, Harris did not directly answer the question, instead referencing the state of the economy during the COVID-19 pandemic and bringing up her plans to try to lower housing costs and promoting herself as a "new generation" of leader.

Harris said her candidacy offers the country a chance at "turning the page on an era that sadly has shown us attempts to by some to incite fear to create division in our country."

Janiyah Thomas, Black media director for the Trump campaign, said Harris' remarks to the National Association of Black Journalists on Tuesday reveal her record of failures for Black Americans.

"She told the NABJ that after three and half years of her failed policies, grocery prices are too high and the American Dream is unattainable for young Americans," Thomas said. "We can't afford four more years of Kamala Harris. It's time to put President Trump back in the White House and restore economic prosperity."

Harris has largely sidestepped traditional media appearances and instead focused on rallies, grassroots organizing and social media engagement, where the vice president can sidestep questions from independent journalists about her policy record and proposed agenda.

Tuesday's event was moderated by Eugene Daniels of Politico, Gerren Keith Gaynor of theGrio and Tonya Mosley of WHYY, a Philadelphia-area public radio station that co-hosted the gathering.

Asked whether she would change U.S. policy toward the Israel-Hamas war, Harris said she endorsed Biden's pause on 2000-lb. bombs to Israel and didn't signal any daylight with the president.

Harris noted the killing of Israeli civilians — and some Americans — by Hamas on Oct. 7 and added that far too many "innocent Palestinians have been killed" in Israel's response.

She added that the Israel-Hamas war has to end and a ceasefire and hostage deal must get done, while calling for a two-state solution to the Israel-Palestinian conflict. She said the goal is to ensure "the Israelis

have security and Palestinians in equal measure have security, have self-determination and dignity.”

NABJ noted the importance of hosting the conversation in Philadelphia, a major city in a battleground state with a large Black population. Philadelphia was also the home to one of the major precursor organizations to NABJ.

For years, the association has invited both major presidential candidates to speak before the convention. Presidents George W. Bush, Barack Obama and Joe Biden all attended NABJ events as presidential candidates or while in office.

Speaker Johnson sets House vote on government funding bill after a one-week postponement

By KEVIN FREKING Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Speaker Mike Johnson will move ahead with a temporary spending bill that would prevent a partial government shutdown when the new budget year begins on Oct. 1, despite the headwinds that prompted him to pull the bill from consideration last week.

The bill includes a requirement that people registering to vote must provide proof of citizenship, which has become a leading election-year priority for Republicans raising the specter of noncitizens voting in the U.S., even though it’s already illegal to do so and research has shown that such voting is rare.

“I urge all of my colleagues to do what the overwhelming majority of the people of this country rightfully demand and deserve — prevent non-American citizens from voting in American elections,” Johnson said Tuesday.

Johnson told reporters he was not ready to discuss an alternative plan to keep the government funded other than what will come before the House on Wednesday.

“I’m not having any alternative conversations. That’s the play. It’s an important one. And I’m going to work around the clock to try and get it done,” Johnson said.

The legislation faces an uphill climb in the House and has no chance in the Senate. The vast majority of Democrats oppose it, and some Republicans do, too, but for different reasons.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., said the only way to prevent a government shutdown was for both sides to work together on an agreement. He said the House vote announced by Johnson was doomed to fail.

“The only thing that will accomplish is make clear that he’s running into a dead end,” Schumer said. “We must have a bipartisan plan instead.”

The legislation would fund agencies at current levels while lawmakers work out their differences on a full-year spending agreement.

Democrats, and some Republicans, are pushing for a short extension. A temporary fix would allow the current Congress to hammer out a final bill after the election and get it to President Joe Biden’s desk for his signature.

But Johnson and some of the more conservative members of his conference are pushing for a six-month extension in the hopes that Republican nominee Donald Trump will win the election and give them more leverage when crafting the full-year bill.

Schumer said a six-month measure would shortchange the Pentagon and other government agencies that need more certainty about funding levels.

“You simply cannot run the military with six-month stopgaps,” Schumer said.

Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell declined to weigh in on how long to extend funding. He said Schumer and Johnson, ultimately, will have to work out a final agreement that can pass both chambers.

“The one thing you cannot have is a government shutdown. It would be politically beyond stupid for us to do that right before the election because certainly we would get the blame,” McConnell said.

Johnson said last week that he was not giving up on his proposal just yet and would be working through the weekend to build support. He said ensuring that only U.S. citizens vote in federal elections is “the most pressing issue right now and we’re going to get this job done.”

On Sunday, he traveled to Florida to meet with Trump, who had earlier seemingly encouraged a government shutdown if Republicans “don’t get assurances on Election Security.” Trump said on the social media platform Truth Social that they should not go forward with a stopgap bill without such assurances.

The House approved a bill with the proof of citizenship mandate back in July. Some Republicans who view the issue as popular with their constituents have been pushing for another chance to show their support for the measure. Still, other Republicans are expected to vote no because they view the spending in the bill as excessive.

Casualties in Myanmar push Southeast Asia’s death toll from Typhoon Yagi past 500

BANGKOK (AP) — Floods and landslides in Myanmar triggered by last week’s Typhoon Yagi and seasonal monsoon rains have claimed at least 226 lives, with 77 people missing, state-run media reported Tuesday. The new figures push the total number of dead in Southeast Asia from the storm past 500.

The accounting of casualties has been slow, in part due to communication difficulties with the affected areas. Myanmar is wracked by a civil war that began in 2021 after the army seized power from the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi. Independent analysts believe the ruling military controls much less than half of the country’s territory.

Typhoon Yagi earlier hit Vietnam, northern Thailand and Laos, killing almost 300 people in Vietnam, 42 in Thailand and four in Laos, according to the ASEAN Coordinating Center for Humanitarian Assistance. It said 21 people were killed in the Philippines, with another 26 missing.

The U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, said on Monday that an estimated 631,000 people may have been affected by flooding across Myanmar. There were already 3.4 million displaced people in Myanmar at the beginning of September, according to the U.N. refugee agency, mostly because of war and unrest in recent years.

Heavy rains from the typhoon and the seasonal monsoon brought widespread flash floods to Myanmar, especially the central regions of Mandalay, Magway, Bago and the Ayeyarwaddy Delta; the eastern states Shan, Kayah, Kayin and Mon; and the country’s capital, Naypyitaw.

Some flooded areas have started to see water levels recede but others in the Shan and Kayah states remain critical.

More than 160,000 houses have been damaged and 438 temporary relief camps have been opened for more than 160,000 flood victims, Myanma Alinn reported. The military government announced that nearly 240,000 people have been displaced.

Myanma Alinn said 117 government offices and buildings, 1,040 schools, 386 religious buildings, roads, bridges, power towers, and telecom towers were damaged by the floods in 56 townships.

It also said nearly 130,000 animals were killed and more than 259,000 hectares (640,000 acres) of agricultural land were damaged by the floods.

The U.N.’s humanitarian affairs agency said food, drinking water, medicine, clothes, dignity kits, and shelters are urgent needs for the flood victims but alleviation efforts are hampered by blocked roads, damaged bridges and ongoing armed clashes.

Vice Senior Gen. Soe Win, the second-ranking member of Myanmar’s ruling military council, said the country had received relief aid from other countries, and some humanitarian assistance from the Association of Southeast Asia, will arrive soon.

Soe Win, speaking at a meeting of the National Disaster Management Committee on Monday, said that the extent of flooding in the capital was unprecedented, and cleaning and rehabilitation activities in the flooded areas began Thursday as the water level declined.

Myanmar experiences extreme weather during the monsoon virtually every year. In 2008, Cyclone Nargis killed more than 138,000 people around the Irrawaddy River delta. The then-military government was harshly discredited when it delayed acceptance of outside aid.

A French man admits in court to drugging his wife so that he and dozens of men could rape her

By DIANE JEANTET Associated Press

AVIGNON, France (AP) — A 71-year-old French man admitted in court Tuesday that for nearly a decade, he repeatedly drugged his unwitting wife and invited dozens of men to rape her while she lay unconscious in their bed.

His wife of 50 years, who has divorced him since his arrest, also got to speak, telling the court that she feels completely betrayed.

In a trial that has gripped France and raised awareness about sexual violence in the home and beyond, Dominique Pélicot told the court that he also raped his wife, Gisèle Pélicot, and that the 50 men standing trial alongside him understood exactly what they were doing.

"Today I maintain that, along with the other men here, I am a rapist," Dominique Pélicot testified. "They knew everything. They can't say otherwise."

Pélicot's testimony marked the most important moment yet in a trial that has shocked the world. Although he previously confessed to investigators, his court testimony will be crucial for the panel of judges to decide on the fate of his co-defendants, who range in age from 26 to 74. Many of them deny having raped Gisèle Pélicot, saying her then-husband had manipulated them or that they believed she was consenting.

Many following the case also hope his testimony might help explain why Dominique Pélicot would subject the mother of his three children to such unconscionable abuse.

Gisèle Pélicot has become a hero to many rape victims and a symbol of the fight against sexual violence in France for agreeing to waive her anonymity in the case, letting the trial be public and appearing openly in front of the media. She shows up every day, passing through the courthouse security line behind men accused of raping her. As she left court during a break Tuesday, supporters brought her flowers.

After days of delay due to what his lawyers said was a kidney stone and urinary tract infection, Dominique Pélicot, seated in a wheelchair, testified that the charges against him are true. With his ex-wife looking on from the packed gallery and his voice trembling and barely audible at times, he started a long day of testimony trying to explain childhood traumas that he said scarred and molded him into the person he became.

"One is not born a pervert, one becomes a pervert," Pélicot told the judges after recounting, sometimes in tears, being raped by a male hospital nurse at age 9 and being forced to take part in a gang rape at age 14.

Pélicot also said that for years, his father sexually abused a young girl his family had taken in, and that his brother later said their father had invited other men to do the same.

He regretted that his parents didn't let him continue his studies after he turned 14. He said that around that time, he tried to persuade his mother to leave the house with him, but "she never wanted to."

"I don't really want to talk about this, I am just ashamed of my father. In the end, I didn't do any better," said Pélicot, who faces 20 years in prison if convicted.

After he spoke about his difficult upbringing, Gisèle Pélicot was given the opportunity to address the court.

"It is hard for me to hear this. For 50 years, I lived with a man. I couldn't imagine even one second that he could have committed acts of rape," she said. "I trusted this man entirely."

The two looked at each other, him from behind the dock's glass window and her from the witness stand.

"I am guilty," he told her. "I regret everything I did. I ask you for forgiveness, even if it is unpardonable."

Asked if she wanted to respond, Gisèle Pélicot turned and left the stand.

When asked about his feelings toward his ex-wife, Dominique Pélicot said she didn't deserve what he did.

"From my youth, I remember only shocks and traumas, forgotten partly thanks to her," he said in tears.

At that moment, Gisèle Pélicot put on her sunglasses.

Later, Dominique Pélicot said, "I was crazy about her. She replaced everything. I ruined everything."

A supermarket security guard caught Pélicot in 2020 secretly shooting video up women's skirts, according to court documents. During a search of his house and electronic devices, police found thousands of photos

and videos of men engaging in sexual acts with Gisèle Pélicot while she appeared to be unconscious in bed. With the recordings, police were able to track down most of the 72 suspects they were seeking, but not all.

In addition to the photos and videos of Gisèle Pélicot, investigators found photos of the Pelicots' daughter, Caroline Darian, and two daughters-in-law that were surreptitiously taken while they were in their underwear, getting undressed or taking showers, according to authorities.

While her mother has stayed remarkably calm throughout the trial, Darian walked out of the courtroom Tuesday as her father was being asked about photos of her that were found on his laptop.

"Excuse me, I'm going to vomit," she said angrily before rushing out. She has written a book about what happened to her family, called "And I Stopped Calling you Daddy."

After retiring, the Pélicots moved from the Paris region to a house in Mazan, a small town in the Provence region.

When police officers called Gisèle Pélicot in for questioning in late 2020, she initially told them her husband was "a great guy," according to legal documents. They then showed her some photos. She left and later divorced her husband.

Since Dominique Pélicot's arrest, other cases have surfaced. He was fined after being caught shooting video of a women's crotch in 2010 and required to see a psychologist. Gisèle Pélicot has said she never knew about this incident.

Under French law, the proceedings inside the courtroom cannot be filmed or photographed. Dominique Pélicot has been brought into the court through a special entrance that's inaccessible for the media, because he and some other defendants are being held in custody during the trial and can't be filmed. Defendants who are not in custody have been arriving at the courthouse wearing surgical masks or hoods to avoid having their faces filmed or photographed.

Among those hoping to secure a seat to watch the Tuesday's proceedings was Bernadette Tessonière, a 69-year-old retiree who lives a half-hour drive from Avignon, where the trial is taking place.

"How is it possible that in 50 years of communal life, one can live next to someone who hides his life so well? This is scary," she said.

Congress is gridlocked. These members are convinced AI legislation could break through

By DAN MERICA Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A bipartisan group of lawmakers introduced legislation Tuesday that would prohibit political campaigns and outside political groups from using artificial intelligence to misrepresent the views of their rivals by pretending to be them.

The introduction of the bill comes as Congress has failed to regulate the fast-evolving technology and experts warn that it threatens to overwhelm voters with misinformation. Those experts have expressed particular concern over the dangers posed by "deepfakes," AI-generated videos and memes that can look lifelike and cause voters to question what is real and what is fake.

Lawmakers said the bill would give the Federal Election Commission the power to regulate the use of artificial intelligence in elections in the same way it has regulated other political misrepresentation for decades. The FEC has started to consider such regulations.

"Right now, the FEC does not have the teeth, the regulatory authority, to protect the election," said Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick, a Pennsylvania Republican who co-sponsored the legislation. Other sponsors include Rep. Adam Schiff, a California Democrat; Rep. Derek Kilmer, a Washington Democrat; and Lori Chavez-DeRemer, an Oregon Republican.

Fitzpatrick and Schiff said the odds were against the bill passing this year. Nevertheless, they said they don't expect the measure to face much opposition and could be attached to a must-pass measure in the waning days the congressional session.

Schiff described the bill as a modest first step in addressing the threat posed by deepfakes and other

false AI-generated content, arguing the legislation's simplicity was an asset.

"This is really probably the lowest hanging fruit there is" in terms of addressing the misuse of AI in politics, Schiff said. "There's so much more we're going to need to do, though, to try to attack the avalanche of misinformation and disinformation."

Congress has been paralyzed on countless issues in recent years, and regulating AI is no exception.

"This is another illustration of congressional dysfunction," Schiff said.

Schiff and Fitzpatrick are not alone in believing artificial intelligence legislation is needed and can become law. Rep. Madeleine Dean, a Pennsylvania Democrat, and Rep. María Elvira Salazar, a Florida Republican, introduced legislation earlier this month that aims to curb the spread of unauthorized AI-generated deepfakes. A bipartisan group of senators proposed companion legislation in the Senate.

Opposition to such legislation has primarily focused on not stifling a burgeoning technology sector or making it easier for another country to become the hub for the AI industry.

Congress doesn't "want to put a rock on top of innovation either and not allow it to flourish under the right circumstances," Rep. French Hill, an Arkansas Republican, said in August at a reception hosted by the Center for AI Safety. "It's a balancing act."

The Federal Election Commission in August took its first step toward regulating AI-generated deepfakes in political advertising when it took a procedural vote after being asked to regulate ads that use artificial intelligence to misrepresent political opponents as saying or doing something they didn't.

The commission is expected to further discuss the matter on Thursday.

The commission's efforts followed a request from Public Citizen, a progressive consumer rights organization, that the agency clarify whether a 1970s-era law that bans "fraudulent misrepresentation" in campaign communications also applies to AI-generated deepfakes. While the election commission has been criticized in recent years for being ineffective, it does have the ability to take action against campaigns or groups that violate these laws, often through fines.

Craig Holman, a government affairs lobbyist for Public Citizen who helped the lawmakers write the bill being introduced Tuesday, said he was concerned that fraudulent misrepresentation law only applies to candidates and not parties, outside groups and super PACs.

The bill introduced Tuesday would expand FEC's jurisdiction to explicitly account for the rapid rise of generative AI's use in political communications.

Holman noted that some states have passed laws to regulate deepfakes but said federal legislation was necessary to give the Federal Election Commission the clear authority.

Major companies abandon an LGBTQ+ rights report card after facing anti-diversity backlash

By CATHY BUSSEWITZ AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — More than two decades ago, when gay men and lesbians were prohibited from serving openly in the U.S. military and no state had legalized same-sex marriages, a national LGBTQ+ rights group decided to promote change by grading corporations on their workplace policies.

The Human Rights Campaign initially focused its report card, named the Corporate Equality Index, on ensuring that gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and queer employees did not face discrimination in hiring and on the job. Just 13 companies received a perfect score in 2002. By last year, 545 businesses did even though the requirements have expanded.

But the scorecard itself has come under attack in recent months by conservative activists who targeted businesses as part of a broader pushback against diversity initiatives. Ford, Harley-Davidson and Lowe's are among the companies that announced they would no longer participate in the Corporate Equality Index.

Emboldened by a Supreme Court decision last year that declared race-based affirmative action programs in college admissions unconstitutional, conservative groups have won lawsuits making similar arguments about corporations. They're now targeting workplace initiatives such as diversity programs and hiring practices that prioritize historically marginalized groups, and widening their objections to include programs

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focused on gender identity and sexual orientation.

"We don't believe that people should be identified as groups and that you should right past wrongs by advantaging one group and disadvantaging another group," said Dan Lenington, deputy counsel for the Equality Under the Law Project at the Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty. His firm has represented dozens of clients in challenges to diversity, equity and inclusion, or DEI, programs.

Critics lament the rollback, saying it reverses years of hard-won progress.

"Almost all LGBT community members have been bullied when they were young, and the concept of being bullied is something that hits us really hard. ... It feels like you're letting the bullies win," said David Paisley, senior research director at Community Marketing & Insights, which helps companies market to LGBTQ+ consumers.

WHAT IS THE CORPORATE EQUALITY INDEX?

While many challenges to DEI programs have been about race, activists working to change corporate policies they deride as "woke" have made a point of demanding that companies end their participation in HRC's Corporate Equality Index. Most of the companies that recently announced changes to their DEI approaches did.

Like LGBTQ+ rights in the U.S., the requirements corporations need to meet to receive a high score on the annual index have expanded over the years.

In 2004, the index placed more emphasis on providing comprehensive benefits to domestic partners and improving health care coverage for transgender workers. Later it added categories that gave employers points for promoting equality in the broader LGBTQ+ community.

In 2019, it specified that supplier diversity programs, which encourage companies to work with minority-owned or veteran-owned businesses, must include LGBTQ+ suppliers. By 2022, the index said employers should offer same-sex spouses and domestic partners the same benefits as other couples for in-vitro fertilization and adoption, and that employers must create gender-transition guidelines, among other changes.

WHAT HAS THE EFFECT BEEN?

Experts say the index has helped improve workplace benefits for LGBTQ+ people. The index also prompted many companies to create employee resource groups, which are voluntary, employee-led diversity and inclusion groups for people with shared backgrounds or identities, said Fabrice Houdart, a consultant on LGBTQ+ issues.

The index is also a resource for LGBTQ+ workers to consult before deciding whether to accept a job, Paisley said.

"A company that's getting 100% versus a company getting 25% is an indication to our community about which companies are treating their employees more fairly and equitably," he said.

WHY ARE COMPANIES LEAVING THE INDEX?

Several big companies announced they would end their participation in the index amid pressure from conservative activists who have threatened boycotts and firms such as the Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty that have challenged DEI programs.

"We have no problem with nondiscrimination, but we're worried about these policies going too far and harming innocent third parties who have either religious objections or they're being excluded because they're not LGBTQ or a certain race," Lenington said.

Ford Motor Co. CEO Jim Farley told employees that the company stopped participating in external culture surveys, citing the wide range of beliefs held by employees and customers and the evolving legal environment. He said Ford does not use hiring quotas or tie compensation to diversity goals.

Harley-Davidson posted a statement on X about withdrawing from the index, adding that the company does not have hiring quotas or supplier diversity spending goals, and that employee resource groups would focus exclusively on professional development, networking and mentoring.

When Lowe's announced its departure from the index, the company said it was combining resource groups into one umbrella organization. It also planned to stop sponsoring and participating in some festivals and parades to ensure that company policies are lawful and aligned with its commitment to include everyone.

Brown-Forman, the company that makes Jack Daniel's whiskey, and beer and beverage maker Molson

Coors, highlighted no longer taking part in HRC's corporate survey in their announcements about scaling back their diversity, equity and inclusion programs.

The Human Rights Campaign said it is deducting 25 points from the scores of companies that publicly withdrew and that it would continue to rank every Fortune 500 company regardless of whether they chose to participate.

LEGAL THREATS

Dozens of legal cases have been filed against employers for DEI initiatives, including complaints that target hiring practices, employee resource groups or mentorship programs that plaintiffs say prioritize people of certain races or sexual identities while excluding others.

Most American companies launched a review of their DEI programs last summer in the wake of the Supreme Court decision in *Students for Fair Admissions vs. Harvard*, said Jason Schwartz, co-chair of the labor and employment practice group at Gibson Dunn, a law firm that has helped more than 50 major corporations audit their DEI programs.

"The opponents to these efforts are winning the war of words, and they've got a lot of momentum in the courtroom, so I do think it's a serious threat that needs to be responded to in a thoughtful way," Schwartz said.

But there's also a flip side. Companies built DEI anti-harassment programs in part to mitigate potential legal risks that come with a toxic workplace, and "abandoning these programs in fact opens them up to risk down the road if employees feel discrimination or harassment," said Eric Bloem, vice president at the Human Rights Campaign.

ALIENATING A GROWING CUSTOMER BASE

Companies that distance themselves from the Corporate Equality Index also risk driving away a growing customer group. A Gallup poll conducted in March found that about 1 in 13 adults in the U.S. identify as a member of the LGBTQ+ community, a share that has more than doubled since 2012. Among Generation Z, the proportion is even higher, with about 1 in 5 U.S. adults born between 1997 and 2005 identifying as LGBTQ+.

Some LGBTQ+ customers have said they would boycott companies that are rolling back inclusion initiatives or share negative reviews on social media.

"I think they will lose, in the end, LGBT talent and LGBT consumers," Houdart said. "And the parents of trans kids, which are an increasing population in the United States, they're probably going to remember that those were companies who went out of their way to side with the bullies."

Facebook owner Meta bans Russia state media outlets over 'foreign interference'

By KELVIN CHAN AP Business Writer

LONDON (AP) — Meta said it's banning Russia state media organization from its social media platforms, alleging that the outlets used deceptive tactics to amplify Moscow's propaganda. The announcement drew a rebuke from the Kremlin on Tuesday.

The company, which owns Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram, said late Monday that it will roll out the ban over the next few days in an escalation of its efforts to counter Russia's covert influence operations.

"After careful consideration, we expanded our ongoing enforcement against Russian state media outlets: Rossiya Segodnya, RT and other related entities are now banned from our apps globally for foreign interference activity," Meta said in a prepared statement.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov lashed out, saying that "such selective actions against Russian media are unacceptable," and that "Meta with these actions are discrediting themselves."

"We have an extremely negative attitude towards this. And this, of course, complicates the prospects for normalizing our relations with Meta," Peskov told reporters during his daily conference call.

RT, formerly known as Russia Today, and Russia Segodnya, also denounced the move.

"It's cute how there's a competition in the West — who can try to spank RT the hardest, in order to

make themselves look better," RT said in a release.

Rossiya Segodnya, the parent company behind state news agency RIA Novosti and news brands like Sputnik, said Meta's decision "was not unexpected for us."

"Meta is a deeply politicized organization. We will continue our work in the countries where we are present and this decision will not affect our work," Rossiya Segodnya said in a statement.

Meta's actions comes days after the United States announced new sanctions on RT, accusing the Kremlin news outlet of being a key part of Russia's war machine and its efforts to undermine its democratic adversaries.

U.S. officials alleged last week that RT was working hand-in-hand with the Russian military and running fundraising campaigns to pay for sniper rifles, body armor and other equipment for soldiers fighting in Ukraine. They also said RT websites masqueraded as legitimate news sites but were used to spread disinformation and propaganda in Europe, Africa, South America and elsewhere.

Earlier this month, the Biden administration seized Kremlin-run websites and charged two RT employees of covertly providing millions of dollars in funding to a Tennessee-based content creation company to publish English-language social media videos pushing pro-Kremlin messages.

Moscow has rejected the allegations.

Meta had already taken steps to limit Moscow's online reach. Since 2020 it has been labeling posts and content from state media. Two years later, it stopped Russian state media from running ads and putting their content lower in people's feeds, and the company, along with other other social media sites like YouTube and TikTok, stopped European Union users from accessing RT and Sputnik channels after the outlets were sanctioned by Brussels. Also in 2022 Meta took down a sprawling Russia-based disinformation network spreading Kremlin talking points about the invasion of Ukraine.

Meta and Facebook "already blocked RT in Europe two years ago, now they're censoring information flow to the rest of the world," RT said in its statement.

Moscow has fought back, designating Meta as an extremist group in March 2022, shortly after sending troops into Ukraine, and blocking Facebook and Instagram. Both platforms — as well as Elon Musk's X, formerly known as Twitter, which is also blocked — were popular with Russians before the invasion and the subsequent crackdown on independent media and other forms of critical speech. The social media platforms are now only accessible through virtual private networks.

Israel says halting Hezbollah attacks is now a war goal as officials warn of a wider operation

By JOSEF FEDERMAN and JULIA FRANKEL Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel said Tuesday that halting Hezbollah's attacks in the country's north to allow residents to return to their homes is now an official war goal, as it considers a wider military operation in Lebanon that could ignite an all-out conflict.

Israeli officials have repeatedly threatened to take heavier military action to halt the near-daily attacks, which began shortly after the outbreak of the nearly yearlong Israel-Hamas war in Gaza. Israel has regularly launched airstrikes on Lebanon in response and has targeted and killed senior Hezbollah commanders.

As recently as last month it appeared a full-blown war was imminent.

Tuesday's statement by Israel's security Cabinet signaled a tougher stance at a time when Israeli leaders have stepped up their warnings. But it also appeared to be largely symbolic and may not herald an immediate change in policy.

The tit-for-tat strikes have displaced tens of thousands of people on both sides of the Israeli-Lebanon border. Hezbollah has said it would halt the attacks if there is a cease-fire in Gaza, but those talks have repeatedly bogged down.

The United States has pressed for restraint even as it has rushed military aid to Israel, warning its close ally that a wider war would not achieve its goals.

Israeli media have meanwhile reported that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is considering firing

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Defense Minister Yoav Gallant and replacing him with Gideon Saar, the leader of a small right-wing party who is seen as more hawkish. That would be the biggest leadership shakeup in Israel since Hamas' Oct. 7 attack triggered the war in Gaza and set off wider regional tensions.

The announcement on Lebanon came after Israel's security Cabinet met late into the night. It said the Cabinet has "updated the objectives of the war" to include safely returning the residents of the north to their homes.

"Israel will continue to act to implement this objective," it said.

U.S. envoy Amos Hochstein, who has made several visits to Lebanon and Israel to try to ease tensions, met with Netanyahu on Monday.

Hochstein told Netanyahu that intensifying the conflict with Hezbollah would not help return Israelis evacuated from the border area to their homes, according to a U.S. official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the private talks.

According to the official, Hochstein argued that Netanyahu risked sparking a broad and protracted regional conflict if he moved forward with a full-scale war in Lebanon and said the Biden administration remained committed to finding a diplomatic solution in conjunction with a Gaza cease-fire or on its own.

Netanyahu told Hochstein that residents cannot return without "a fundamental change in the security situation in the north," according to a statement from the prime minister's office. It said that while Netanyahu "appreciates and respects" U.S. support, Israel will "do what is necessary to safeguard its security."

Defense Minister Gallant has meanwhile said the focus of the conflict is shifting from Gaza to Israel's north. He told U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin this week that time is running out for an agreement with Hezbollah, saying "the trajectory is clear."

Hezbollah has said that while it does not want a wider war it is prepared for one.

Raed Berro, a member of Hezbollah's bloc in the Lebanese parliament, said Monday that the militant group "is ready for confrontation and has a lot in its pocket to deter the enemy and protect Lebanon in case Netanyahu thinks of expanding the war."

Lebanese Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri, a close political ally of Hezbollah, largely dismissed the warnings, telling a local newspaper that the Lebanese have grown used to the "increasing Israeli threats ... even if their tone has become louder recently."

The war in Gaza began when Hamas launched a surprise attack into southern Israel, killing some 1,200 people and taking another 250 hostage. Militants are still holding around 100 captives, a third of whom are believed to be dead, after releasing most of the rest during a cease-fire last year.

Israel's retaliatory offensive has killed over 41,000 Palestinians in the territory since Oct. 7, according to Gaza's Health Ministry. The ministry does not differentiate between fighters and civilians in its count but says a little over half of those killed were women and children.

Iran supports Hamas, Hezbollah and other militant groups across the region, which have carried out strikes on Israeli and U.S. targets in solidarity with the Palestinians. A missile launched by Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi rebels on Sunday set off air raid sirens in central Israel without causing casualties. Israel has hinted at a military response.

Israel and Iran traded fire directly for the first time in April, and Iran has threatened to avenge the killing of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in an explosion in Tehran in July. The targeted killing was widely blamed on Israel, which has not said whether it was involved.

The U.S., Qatar and Egypt have spent most of this year trying to broker an agreement in which Hamas would release the hostages in exchange for a lasting cease-fire, a full Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and the release of Palestinians imprisoned by Israel.

President Joe Biden endorsed the framework of the agreement in May and the U.N. Security Council backed it days later. But since then, both Israel and Hamas have accused each other of making new and unacceptable demands, and the talks appear to be at an impasse.

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Today in History: September 18, Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg dies

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Wednesday, Sept. 18, the 262nd day of 2024. There are 104 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Sept. 18, 2020, Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, a towering champion of women's rights who became the court's second female justice, died at her home in Washington at age 87, of complications from pancreatic cancer.

Also on this date:

In 1793, President George Washington laid the cornerstone of the U.S. Capitol.

In 1850, Congress passed the Fugitive Slave Act, which created a force of federal commissioners charged with returning escaped slaves to their owners.

In 1851, the first edition of The New York Times was published.

In 1947, the National Security Act, which created a National Military Establishment and the position of Secretary of Defense, went into effect.

In 1961, United Nations Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld (dahg HAWM'-ahr-shoold) was killed in a plane crash in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia).

In 1970, rock star Jimi Hendrix died in London at age 27.

In 1975, newspaper heiress Patricia Hearst was captured by the FBI in San Francisco, 19 months after being kidnapped by the Symbionese Liberation Army.

In 2014, voters in Scotland rejected independence, opting to remain part of the United Kingdom in a historic referendum.

Today's Birthdays: Hockey Hall of Fame coach Scotty Bowman is 91. Singer Frankie Avalon is 84. Actor Anna Deavere Smith is 74. Neurosurgeon-author-politician Ben Carson is 73. Basketball Hall of Fame coach Rick Pitino is 72. Sen. Tommy Tuberville, R-Ala., is 70. Hockey Hall of Famer Peter Štátný is 68. Baseball Hall of Famer Ryne Sandberg is 65. Actor Holly Robinson Peete is 60. R&B singer Ricky Bell (Bell Biv DeVoe, New Edition) is 57. Basketball Hall of Famer Toni Kukoč is 56. Actor Aisha Tyler is 54. Actor Jada Pinkett Smith is 53. Actor James Marsden is 51. Rapper-TV host Xzibit is 50. Comedian-actor Jason Sudeikis is 49. Former soccer player Ronaldo is 48. TV host Sara Haines is 47. Actor/comedian Billy Eichner is 46. Rapper Dizzee Rascal is 40. Country singer Tae Kerr (Maddie and Tae) is 29. Soccer player Christian Pulisic is 26.