

Groton Daily Independent

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COMMON CENTS IS MOVING TO THE GROTON COMMUNITY CENTER (109 N 3RD STREET) FOR A 3-DAY \$10 BAG SALE!!

SHOP

**THURS, OCT. 10TH 2-7PM
FRI, OCT. 11TH 9AM-3PM
SAT, OCT. 12TH 9AM-3PM**



Friday, Oct. 4

Senior Menu: Beef stew, carrots, Waldorf salad, sherbet, buttermilk biscuit.

No School - Faculty Inservice

Football hosts Aberdeen Roncalli, 7 p.m.

Saturday, Oct. 5

Boys Soccer at Dakota Valley.

Girls Soccer at Garrison, 11 a.m.

Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., 209 N Main

Pumpkin Fest, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Gypsy Day Parade in Aberdeen

Sunday, Oct. 6

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

St. John's Lutheran: Worship with communion: St. John's at 9 a.m., Zion at 11 a.m., No Sunday School.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship with communion, 9 a.m.; Sunday School, 10:15 a.m.; Pastor at Bethesda, 2 p.m.; Choir, 6 p.m.

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

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

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

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Tiger Football
on GDILIVE.COM

Friday, Oct. 4,
7 p.m.
Roncalli



Groton Area hosts Aberdeen Roncalli

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

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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.

Helene Death Toll Rises

The death toll from Hurricane Helene has surpassed 200 people across six states as crews continue searching for survivors in remote areas one week after Helene struck the US. Roughly 900,000 people remain without power, and tens of thousands without running water, as of this writing.

Hurricane Helene is the deadliest storm to make landfall on the US mainland since Hurricane Katrina in 2005. At least 72 victims died in Buncombe County, North Carolina, which includes Asheville and was hardest hit within Helene's roughly 600-mile-long path of destruction. Helene and other storm systems in the past week dumped more than 30 inches of rain on North Carolina, triggering the biggest flooding in the state's recorded history.

Meanwhile, Hurricane Kirk strengthened into a Category 4 storm in the Atlantic. The storm will remain in open waters but is expected to create life-threatening surf and rip currents along the US East Coast this weekend. On the other side of the world, at least two people were killed, 200 injured, and more than 10,000 evacuated after Typhoon Krathon struck southern Taiwan.

Asteroid Buffet

Deep space travelers could potentially eat food produced from a single carbon-rich asteroid for 600 years, according to a new analysis released yesterday. The method could enable spacefarers to become less dependent on Earth-based supply chains, the current source of food for astronauts.

To determine the potential amount of food an asteroid could offer, researchers modeled the biochemical makeup of the 85 million-ton asteroid Bennu and found between 5,500 to 175,000 tons would be required to feed an astronaut per year.

The research is based on defense-funded experiments attempting to convert hard plastics—like those used as containers for military rations—into human-edible food via pyrolysis, an oxygenless heating technique. The process first breaks down the plastic into an oil that is then turned into edible biomass as microbial bacteria consume it. A separate study demonstrated bacteria successfully consumed carbons from a meteorite.

Chagos Islands Handover

The UK has agreed to return the Chagos Islands to Mauritius, ending a decadeslong dispute over the sovereignty of the Indian Ocean archipelago and marking the UK's first territorial concession since its handover of Hong Kong in 1997.

The Chagos Islands, which include the strategic US-UK Diego Garcia military base, were detached from Mauritius in 1965 before its independence in 1968. The UK forcibly evicted around 2,000 islanders to make way for the base, a move declared illegal in a nonbinding ruling by the International Court of Justice in 2019. The agreement allows for the continued operation of the base for an initial 99 years, a resettlement plan for displaced islanders, and provides financial support to Mauritius. The handover is expected to take several years, with many details still to be negotiated.

In total, 65 countries formerly ruled by the UK have gained independence, with 14 territories remaining globally. At its height, the British Empire covered about a quarter of Earth's land surface.

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Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

"Rust" world premiere set for next month's Camerimage festival in Poland, three years after the on-set shooting death of the film's cinematographer Halyna Hutchins.

Country music star Garth Brooks accused in lawsuit of 2019 sexual assault and battery by former employee.

Indiana Fever star Caitlin Clark wins 2024 WNBA Rookie of the Year.

MLB Division Series begins tomorrow; see playoff bracket and schedule.

Science & Technology

Harvard students hack Meta's new AI-powered smart glass to instantaneously reveal people's personal information just by looking at their face; pair connected the glasses to the facial search engine PimEyes.

Engineers demonstrate microchip-sized tractor beam capable of picking up and moving tiny particles using only light.

Bacteria implanted into fungus can recreate the basic features of cells, offering a potential source for the origin of complex life, study suggests.

Business & Markets

US stock markets close lower (S&P 500 -0.2%, Dow -0.4%, Nasdaq -0.0%); investors await latest jobs report data today.

Dockworkers' union suspends strike until Jan. 15 to allow for negotiations.

PayPal completes first business transaction using its PYUSD stablecoin, which the financial company launched last year.

OpenAI receives \$4B revolving credit line, bringing total liquidity to more than \$10B.

Tesla recalls 27,000 Cybertrucks over rearview camera delay in fifth recall since its launch.

Elon Musk (\$244B), Jeff Bezos (\$197B), Mark Zuckerberg (\$181B) top Forbes 400 list of America's richest people; newcomers include Raising Cane's founder Todd Graves (\$9.5B) and Jersey Mike's Subs founder Peter Cancro (\$5.6B).

Politics & World Affairs

Israel continues strikes in Beirut as its forces order evacuation of more than 20 villages and towns in southern Lebanon; nearly 2,000 people killed in Lebanon so far in almost a year of conflict, per Lebanese health ministry.

US Justice Department, Microsoft seize over 100 online domains allegedly used by Russian intelligence agents to hack into government agencies, including the Pentagon and State Department.

Biden administration's student loan forgiveness program to move forward after a Georgia judge lets temporary restraining order expire.

Three Memphis officers involved in 2023 death of Tyre Nichols convicted of witness tampering, one officer convicted of civil rights violations.



Press

Does hitting 10,000 steps a day really make a difference?

New research offers insight into a decades-old recommendation

By Alisa Bowman

Recommended fitness targets can, at times, seem arbitrary. Take the advice to walk 10,000 steps.

The lofty step goal translates to roughly five miles and more than an hour of walking a day depending on your stride length and frequency.

So how did the 10,000 number come to be? What are the health benefits? More importantly, is the target realistic for busy people?

Those answers are nuanced and depend largely on your current level of activity, time availability and occupation, says Andrew R. Jagim, Ph.D., director of sports medicine research at Mayo Clinic. But you might be pleasantly surprised by how quickly you can amass more steps by making small adjustments to your daily routine, Dr. Jagim says.

The 10,000-step goal originated in Japan

In the 1960s, Japanese walking clubs adopted the use of a pedometer called manpo-kei, which translates to 10,000 steps meter.

At the time, scientists knew that more movement generally led to improved health and longevity. However, there was no research to support 10,000 steps as an optimal activity goal. This didn't stop the concept from catching on. Soon, people all over the world were preoccupied with step counting, with devices and activity programs often centered on hitting the 10,000-a-day threshold for step activity.

"While the origination of the 10,000-a-day threshold was a bit speculative and rather arbitrary in nature, there have since been several publications demonstrating a relationship between higher levels of daily step counts and reductions in premature death from any cause," says Dr. Jagim.

How far to walk for improved health and a longer life

Recently, several large studies have put the 10,000 steps advice to the test.

In one of them, published in JAMA Internal Medicine, older women who walked 4,400 steps a day had a 41% lower death rate over the four-year duration of the study compared with women who took 2,700 steps. The risk reduction was even greater for people who took 7,500 steps but largely leveled off after that.

In other research that combined the data from 15 studies involving 47,471 adults, the risk of death over a seven-year span dropped significantly as step counts went up. Compared with adults with the lowest step counts (median, 3,553), people who took the most steps (median, 10,901) had a 40% to 53% lower risk of premature death over seven years.

In addition to adding years to your life, increased step counts also can reduce your risk of heart disease, cancer and dementia, according to other research.

Why more steps translate to better health

Increased step counts seem to protect health in at least two ways, says Dr. Jagim.

First, regular exercise and daily activity help to condition the bones, muscles and blood vessels, protecting their overall functionality, he says.

Second, the more you move, the less you sit. That's key because excess sitting has been linked with blood vessel conditions, joint stiffness, poor metabolic function and reduced longevity.

In one study involving 149,077 participants, people who sat for more than eight hours a day were more likely to die over the study time period of 8.9 years compared with those who sat for less than four hours each day. Even if you exercise for an hour a day, you won't be able to fully undo the negative health ramifications of excessive sitting, finds other research.

"Daily exercise sessions are great," says Dr. Jagim. "But if you work out for an hour and then sit the rest of the day, it is like taking two steps forward and one step back. By getting in more steps, you break up those long periods of sedentary behavior."

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What's the right number of steps for me?

Though various studies have examined slightly different minimum and maximum step counts, they all point to the following advice.

"Any activity, no matter how minimal, is better than no activity, and more activity is better than less," says Dr. Jagim.

In addition, increasing your intensity — by pushing your pace during segments of faster walking or running — can lead to even greater benefits, says Dr. Jagim.

To determine your personal walking goal, first figure out how many daily steps you currently take.

To do this, wear a step counter — most smartphones can double as pedometers — for a week. Then, use that data to determine your daily step average.

Once you know your baseline, try to add 1,000 extra steps a day every two weeks.

So if you currently take 2,500 steps daily, aim for 3,500. Once you've walked 3,500 steps every day for two weeks, consider boosting your daily step goal to 4,500 and build from there.

How to convert steps into miles and minutes

Because every person's stride is slightly different, the number of steps that equals one mile varies from one person to another. Similarly, steps-to-distance conversions depend on your walking speed.

That said, every 1,000 steps roughly equals a half-mile and 10 minutes. The chart below has done the math for you.

Steps	Miles	Minutes
1,000	0.5	10
3,000	1.5	30
5,000	2.5	50
8,000	4	80
10,000	5	100

The miles and minutes associated with 10,000 steps may look like a lot. However, these steps won't all come from planned walking. You likely take more steps than you realize during routine activities, such as navigating the grocery store or walking from your car to an office building, says Dr. Jagim. For this reason, a step counter can come in handy, as it will capture all your daily movement.

How to increase your step count

Look for ways to add steps to your daily routine as well as to planned walks.

Daily routine

- To sneak in more steps during everyday activities, use the following ideas for inspiration.
- When unloading groceries, carry only one or two bags into your home at a time. That way, you'll take extra steps each time you return to the car for another bag.
- Always use the bathroom that is farthest from your current location. So if you're currently on the first floor of a two-story home, use the second-floor bathroom instead of the one on the first floor.
- Whenever you're on the phone, use a headset so you can walk around your home or office.
- As much as possible, refuse to use moving walkways, escalators and elevators.
- Use the parking space farthest from your destination rather than the one that's closest.
- When grocery shopping, walk down every aisle rather than skipping the ones you don't need.
- Do a lap or two around a mall as you wait for your family member to try on clothes.
- Pace along the sidelines as you cheer on children or grandchildren during their sporting events and other activities.
- Set an alarm whenever you're in front of your computer or television. Every 60 minutes or so, get up and move for a minute or more.

Planned activity

Your routine daily activities, mentioned above, will likely get you at least a third of your way to your step goal. Use planned walking sessions to fill in the rest.

Keep in mind that you don't have to complete all your planned walking time at once. Walking for 10 minutes three times a day offers just as much of a health boost as walking for 30 minutes all at once.

One way to encourage yourself to get in more planned walking time is to do it with a family member or friend. Alternatively, you can walk with a pet. Research has shown that people who have a dog are more likely to get in more steps throughout the week than are people who don't have a dog.

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Service Notice: Joyce Sanderson

Mass of Christian Burial for Joyce Sanderson, 86, of Conde will be 10:30 a.m., Tuesday, October 8th at St. Joseph's Catholic Church, Turton. Father Gregory Tschakert will officiate. Burial will follow in St. John's Catholic Cemetery, Conde under the direction of Paetznick-Garness Funeral Chapel.

Visitation will be held on Monday from 5-7 p.m. at the funeral chapel with a prayer service at 7:00 p.m.

Joyce passed away Monday, September 30, 2024 at her home.



Gazetteers presented to Groton Area third graders

Groton Unit #39 of the American Legion Auxiliary recently presented Gazetteers to the Groton Area School third grade students. These books are a gift that become each student's personal dictionary and more. The teachers and students will be using them in the classroom throughout the year, and the book is theirs to keep at the end of the school year. Groton Unit #39 with the help of the third grade teachers participate in The Dictionary Project, whose mission is to ensure that everyone will be able to enjoy the benefits of owning a dictionary. Pictured with the students are auxiliary members Tami Zimney and Laila Roberts. (Courtesy photo)



Warning signs found in new South Dakota economic data

Bart Pfankuch

South Dakota News Watch

So far in the post-pandemic period, the South Dakota economy is humming along nicely, though some new economic indicators reveal concerns that growth might slow in the coming months or years.

According to a recent financial forecast produced by the Governor's Council of Economic Advisors, many data points show the state has been in a very strong financial position in regard to housing, employment, income and gross domestic production.

However, three economic experts asked by News Watch to review and analyze the state forecast said the almost unprecedented growth seen since the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 appears to be tapering off.

"I'd say our economy has grown very strongly over the last three years, uncharacteristically strongly, and this year, we are seeing kind of a reversion to the mean, kind of a return to more of the normal, if you will," said Jared McEntaffer, CEO of the Dakota Institute, a nonprofit group focused on analyzing and aiding the South Dakota economy.

New data points underscore challenges

Furthermore, the experts said a few indicators in the recent state report should be watched closely, as they carry potential warning signs for the future.

Chief among those concerning indicators:

- A somewhat stark drop in overall farm income since 2022 that can cause negative ripple effects across the entire state economy.
- Lower-than-expected state sales tax collections in June and July, which could portend a crisis if that trend continues – especially if voters decide in November to end the sales tax on consumable goods.
- The vast divide between the roughly 30,000 open jobs in the state and the 10,000 unemployed people in the workforce, which can stall business growth and productivity.
- The state's 2% unemployment rate, which could lead to employers hoarding existing workers and preventing businesses from being able to expand or grow.
- A steady slide in growth rate in personal incomes since 2021.
- A slip in gross domestic product growth in 2024 that may be the result of other economic factors that are slowing growth overall in the state.

Despite those results, McEntaffer said that, "There's no red flags that I'm seeing that jump out to me and say, 'Hey, we could be looking at a change in fortunes in South Dakota.'"

Here is an at-a-glance look at a few economic indicators that the economists highlighted in the Aug. 29, 2024, report.

Farm incomes fall from peak

According to the state report, overall farm income in South Dakota was around \$700 million in 2006, then rose to \$3.7 billion in 2011 before dropping to about \$1.2 billion in 2016-17. When the pandemic hit in 2020, however, demand and commodity prices both rose sharply and as a result, so did farm income, reaching \$3.7 billion in 2021 and peaking at \$4.4 billion in 2022.

Since then, however, prices have come down and overall farm income fell as well, to \$3.8 billion in 2023, with prices for corn and soybeans continuing to decline in 2024. Spending on farm equipment also dipped in 2023, the state report showed.

Joe Santos, a macro economics professor at South Dakota State University, said commodity prices paid to state farmers rose sharply during the COVID-19 pandemic and when war broke out in Ukraine, due to

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the loss of production of grain in Ukraine and the initial disruption of supply lines that drove up demand.

"Obviously, we don't want to see a pandemic, and we'd love to see peace in Ukraine," he said. "But without those pressures, prices will sort of ease. And while they won't go into the toilet, they won't be where they were when you had a pandemic and the belligerent activity that drove up commodity prices."

The dip in farm incomes and the resulting negative outcomes statewide are good examples of how the South Dakota economy is often tied to external forces and events, Santos said.

"I think the way you're going to see sluggishness in terms of economic activity in the state is probably going to be imported, in that the economic activity of this state reflects activity outside the state," Santos said. "I think that's probably our greatest vulnerability in South Dakota, in the state's sensitivity to economic activity outside the state."

Pluses and minuses of low unemployment

South Dakota is in an unusual position when it comes to its employment picture.

According to state data, non-farm employment growth has risen sharply since hitting a 12-year low point during the height of the pandemic in 2020, when the state had about 350,000 people working. Since then, non-farm employment has risen to about 470,000 people working, an increase that is only slightly below the national employment rate.

Meanwhile, the unemployment rate in South Dakota, which was about 3.5% in 2014 and which rose to 8.5% during the pandemic, has now fallen to around 2%, according to state data. The national unemployment rate has followed a similar pattern, jumping to more than 14% in 2020 and now hovering around 4.5%.

All three economists interviewed by News Watch pointed to the low unemployment rate as a problem, though generally a good problem to have.

Santos called the low unemployment rate a "second-order problem," that is less impactful than high unemployment, which would make it hard for people who want to work to find jobs.

But Santos also said an unemployment rate of 2% or lower could create a soft spot in the state economy. "I think the downside is that the economic activity in the state is constrained by its inability to attract workers," Santos said.

David Chicoine, a former president and economics professor at South Dakota State University, said economists across the country are trying to determine what level of unemployment is acceptable to sustain larger economic growth.

"The question that has come up since COVID and since the Great Recession, is what is the appropriate level of unemployment to have a robust economy?" he said. "Clearly, 2% is, in most people's view, too low because that means you don't have enough workers to take advantage of new opportunities and sustain long-term growth."

Worker shortage a concern

The other, somewhat related, concerning data point is that the state has about 33,000 open jobs and 10,000 unemployed people, which Chicoine said can stunt productivity and growth in the business sector.

That gap exists even as the state has seen population growth of 1.5% in 2022 and more than 1% in 2023, both rates that outpaced national growth.

"I still think the economy is going to grow, but at what pace?" he said. "If you've got more jobs than you have people, that's going to put a constraint on the ability to grow because you're just not going to be able to have the output of a stronger labor force."

McEntaffer said the lack of workforce is largely due to the geography and demographics of South Dakota, which is a rural, low population state compared to other states.

Other than increasing innovation or raising productivity of individual workers, the only way to fill open jobs is to attract more people to the state, he said.

"It is putting restrictions for businesses and consumers," McEntaffer said. "We're right to do what we can to attract people. It's a strong economy, it's a great place to live and all of that, and if we can get more people here, that will help alleviate some of those strains on the economy."

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General fund revenues

After two years of consistently steady growth in revenues, buoyed by billions in federal government stimulus money given to the state and local governments, businesses and individuals, revenue growth slowed in June.

In July, the state experienced a decline in revenues compared to legislative estimates. The June data shows an increase of just 0.4% over legislative estimates, and July saw a 3.7% negative growth figure, with a \$9 million shortfall compared to legislative projections.

Chicoine said the recent slowdown is not a major concern unless the trend continues beyond the end of the state's fiscal year in June 2025. TK

"If we flatten out for the rest of the year, and we're already down in the first month of the new fiscal year (July), we won't know the full magnitude of any decline until we get there," Chicoine said. "The negative growth that we saw suggests the downward trend could continue and accelerate."

Housing prices and construction

South Dakota followed the national housing market fairly closely in recent years, especially in growth rate of home construction and prices.

The home price indices, a broad measure of average home sale and resale prices, rose slowly in South Dakota and the U.S. from 2012 to 2021, then showed a significant price jump over the past three years.

Construction of new homes in South Dakota dipped to about 3,000 in 2019, then peaked at about 9,000 in 2022 and came down to about 4,000 in 2023 with a slight uptick since.

Santos said he believes the Federal Reserve Board has taken appropriate steps in regard to managing lending rates to reduce inflation and stave off a possible recession in the U.S. and in South Dakota.

Rising interest rates in recent years, followed by the recent lowering of rates, was appropriate, he said. The lower rates should now stimulate more residential and commercial development and sales activity that will bolster the overall economies of the state and nation, Santos said.

In their final analysis, all three economists said they see a positive economic future for South Dakota.

Santos said he expects the state to continue to benefit from government policies that generally tend to be pro-business and pro-growth.

"There is a kind of a deregulatory, pro-free enterprise mindset in the state, and I suspect that's a tailwind, not headwind," he said. "There is a kind of a business-first orientation that if we have issues, let's see if the private sector can deal with them first."

This story was produced by South Dakota News Watch, an independent, nonprofit news organization.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

State commission scraps plan to reduce mountain lion numbers after public pushback

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - OCTOBER 3, 2024 7:06 PM

Facing public opposition, a state commission abandoned a plan Thursday in Huron that would have reduced the mountain lion population goal in South Dakota's Black Hills by 50 animals.

The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Commission adopted the 2024 to 2028 Mountain Lion Action Plan with a population goal of 200-300 lions, rather than the proposed lower goal of 150-250. The plan, which is reevaluated every five years, sets population objectives and outlines strategies for monitoring, controlling and managing the animals.

The lower population target sparked hundreds of comments for and against the proposal. Written comments in the last month were split with a majority opposed but a significant minority in favor, according to the Department of Game, Fish and Parks.

Public opposition

Julie Anderson, of Rapid City, criticized the reduction proposal during the meeting, saying it would primarily benefit a small group of trophy hunters who would be able to hunt the animals in greater numbers to reduce their population.

"The senseless cruelty for the bloodlust of a few needs to end," Anderson said earlier in written testimony. "The majority of the public does not approve of trophy hunting any animal, and killing an apex predator with or without hounds for bragging rights is an abomination against nature."

Kathleen Schmidt said she has never seen a mountain lion in the Dalton Lake area of the Black Hills where she lives, but she'd like to.

"Upping the quota pleases the hunters, and we're just wondering why this commission seems to favor the hunters over the wildlife watchers," Schmidt said.

Some hunters also opposed reducing the population goal, including Dave Goodwin of the Black Hills Mountain Lion Foundation.

"We feel strongly that the mountain lion action plan was great as it was presented in draft form at the last commission meeting," he said, referencing the higher population goal in the earlier draft.

Paula Von Weller of Spearfish testified that mountain lions play a critical role as predators in the Black Hills, helping to reduce disease by preying on diseased, weakened animals.

"Lions provide essential ecosystem services by removing chronic wasting disease from deer and elk populations," Weller said.



A mountain lion in the Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge in Montana. (Courtesy of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service)

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Support for lower numbers

Patrick Weimer of Spearfish submitted a comment in support of the lower population goal.

"This will likely have a large positive effect on our deer, elk, turkey, and mountain goat numbers that have drastically dropped in the last several years," he wrote.

Some ranchers have argued high mountain lion populations lead to increased livestock losses and safety risks. Leslie Soring of Whitewood commented that her sister lost a \$10,000, three-week old colt to a mountain lion last spring.

"If mountain lions become less afraid of humans and continue to feel comfortable killing livestock and wandering into town, it's only a matter of time before they harm someone," she wrote in support of the change. "It is unfortunate that their habitat is shrinking and not something that they have caused. But it is happening, so our conservation efforts need to adapt to this."

Incidents of mountain lions preying on domestic animals are low, according to the mountain lion plan.

"Fortunately, few landowners have interactions with mountain lions because of the animal's secretive nature and relatively low densities," the plan says.

Mountain lions are native to South Dakota and were numerous in the Black Hills until bounties and unregulated hunting drastically reduced their numbers. In 1978, the species was listed as threatened. Their recovery began as protections were implemented, and by 2003, a breeding population had reestablished. The first regulated hunting season was introduced in 2005 to manage their growing numbers.

Disagreement remains

Debate over how to best manage South Dakota's mountain lions is likely to continue.

Before the population reduction proposal was introduced, several wildlife advocacy groups, including the Mountain Lion Foundation, Prairie Audubon Society, and the Humane Society of the United States, warned that the 200-300 population goal was too low, risked inbreeding and threatened the long-term survival of mountain lions. The groups also urged the state to invest in non-lethal conflict prevention methods, such as livestock guardian dogs, rather than hunting.

The plan says hunters in the Black Hills Fire Protection District, where most of South Dakota's mountain lions live, must continue reporting any harvested lions within 24 hours. The harvest limit in the district is 60 mountain lions per year, or 40 females if that number is reached first.

The state collects tissue samples from harvested animals to monitor population health. In other parts of the state, where mountain lions are less common, a year-round open season with no limits remains in place.

Under South Dakota law, landowners can kill a mountain lion if it poses an immediate threat to their livestock or pets, but they must report the incident to Game, Fish and Parks within 24 hours.

According to a survey mentioned in the plan, 80% of residents say it's important to them to know that mountain lions exist, whether or not they ever see one in the wild; 83% of residents think hunting is an acceptable way to manage mountain lion populations.

Other news: Fee increases finalized

The commission also finalized a proposal aiming to raise nearly \$10 million of additional revenue annually through various outdoor recreation fee increases. The commission made one amendment to the proposal, removing certain cabin-fee increases.

Hunter organizations including the South Dakota Wildlife Federation, South Dakota Bowhunters Association, and South Dakota Waterfowl Association all expressed support for the proposal prior to the commission's unanimous vote.

The Legislative Rules and Review Committee will now consider giving it the final stamp of approval.

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

Standing Rock Tribe is latest to sue social media companies for alleged mental health effects

BY: JOHN HULT - OCTOBER 3, 2024 5:01 PM

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in North and South Dakota has filed a lawsuit in California against the parent companies of Facebook, Snapchat, YouTube and TikTok.

The lawsuit, which alleges the tech companies' social media apps are addictive and contribute to a mental health crisis on tribal lands, is the latest in a series filed by Native American tribes through the Minneapolis-based Robins Kaplan law firm.

In April, the Spirit Lake Tribe in North Dakota and the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin filed the first two lawsuits to make the allegations of deceptive, harmful practices and demand compensation "in an amount to be determined in a trial."

The lawsuits all allege that the social media companies have preyed upon teens for profit by offering up content through algorithms designed to hook users and keep them online for an unhealthy amount of time.

Recent research "draws a direct line from harmful features on social media to the youth mental health crisis happening in this country," Robins Kaplan attorney Tara Sutton said in an April press release on the initial complaints.

That press release also pointed out that tribal teen suicide rates are roughly 3.5 times higher than the national average in the United States, according to the Center for Native American Youth.

According to Robins Kaplan, the firm has filed similar lawsuits on behalf of the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa in Minnesota, Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate of South Dakota, Spirit Lake Nation in North Dakota, the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin and Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians based in North Dakota.

The social media companies have also been sued by 33 state attorneys general for their alleged targeting of teens. South Dakota Attorney General Marty Jackley is among the plaintiffs in that case.

The companies involved have pledged to improve their protections for young people. A representative from Meta, Facebook's parent company, appeared in Pierre this week to trumpet the protective measures on its Instagram app. The representative also said it would support an effort by lawmakers in South Dakota to implement app store-based age verification.

The Standing Rock complaint, filed on Oct. 1, charges the social media companies with being a public nuisance, negligence and deceptive practices.

"Defendants' conduct has created a public health crisis in Plaintiff's communities," the complaint says. "There has been a surge in the proportion of youth in Plaintiff's community who are anxious, depressed, or suicidal."

Requests for comment sent to the social media companies by South Dakota Searchlight were not immediately returned.

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 Standing Rock Sioux Tribe is the latest of several tribes suing social media companies over their alleged effects on mental health. (Getty Images illustration)

Sioux Falls prison lockdown ends

BY: JOHN HULT - OCTOBER 3, 2024 4:42 PM

The Department of Corrections has ended a lockdown that began 17 days ago at the state penitentiary in Sioux Falls.

According to a press release from department spokesman Michael Winder, the lockdown was a "proactive security measure" meant to ferret out contraband throughout its Sioux Falls facilities. The lockdown was not tied to an assault or disturbance, the press release says, and no staff or inmates were injured.

The facilities are "transitioning" off the lockdown, Winder said, which ran from Sept. 16 through Oct. 2.

Winder had previously sent a press release with photos of what the agency described as contraband.

The DOC has not said how many lockdowns have taken place in 2024. In response to a question from South Dakota Searchlight, Winder wrote Thursday evening that the DOC does not track lockdowns, their length, or their reason.

There were lockdowns following unrest at the penitentiary in March and at Mike Durfee State Prison in Springfield in June. The March incidents led to indictments for inmates and for people outside the walls who were allegedly involved in delivering drugs to inmates and plotting an arson.

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 G. Norton Jameson Annex at the South Dakota State Penitentiary in Sioux Falls. (John

Hult/South Dakota Searchlight)

SD attorney general lends support to fight against animal confinement law

BY: CAMI KOONS, IOWA CAPITAL DISPATCH - OCTOBER 3, 2024 2:13 PM

Iowa and 21 other pork-production states, including South Dakota, are pushing for an appeal of a federal district court ruling that upheld a 2016 ballot measure in Massachusetts to prohibit the sale of pork, poultry and veal from livestock that were "confined in a cruel manner."

Iowa Attorney General Brenna Bird headed an amici curiae, or an informational brief in support of one side of a case, with 21 additional states to voice opposition to laws that impose "unworkable restrictions" on hog producers.

The 2016 measure, known as Question 3, has been challenged multiple times by hog farmers and pork coalitions, most recently by Missouri-based Triumph Foods, with support of a coalition of pork producers, including Iowa, in 2023.

The law is similar to California's Proposition 12 in that both restrict the sale of meat from pigs, calves raised for veal or egg-laying hens that were raised in a confining manner, "that prevents the animal from lying down, standing up, fully extending its limbs, or turning around freely."

The U.S. Supreme Court rejected challenges made by pork producers of the California law in May 2023. U.S. District Judge William Young in the District of Massachusetts dismissed most of the most of the claims against the Massachusetts law, leaving only one in question, which he rejected in July 2024.

This final claim argued that the Massachusetts law, the Prevention of Farm Animal Cruelty Act, was

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preempted by the Federal Meat Inspection Act. Young upheld the law and ruled it banned the sale of noncompliant meat and did not directly impact slaughterhouse rules.

The brief filed by Bird and the other states, is in support of Triumph Foods' appeal to the latest district court decision.

"The Massachusetts pork ban is absolute hog-wash," Bird said in a press release about the brief. "Massachusetts does not get to tell Iowans how to raise their pork."

The brief opens with a hypothetical of Iowa imposing a trade restriction on shellfish based on the way it was harvested, even though the land-locked state has little knowledge of these processes.

"That is what Massachusetts is doing here—imposing a detrimental and overly burdensome regulatory scheme on the almost entirely out-of-Massachusetts pig farmers and pork processors," the brief reads.

The brief goes on to say that Q3 will, "deny market access to out-of-state pork farmers and processors," "harm agricultural states," and "increase the price of pork for all Americans."

The opposing states argue that the law violates several inter-state commerce clauses of the Constitution.

The recent brief argues that allowing states to set their own confinement rules creates a patchwork of regulation, which would be costly for pork producers to adhere to.

"Farmers in Iowa could invest millions of dollars to remodel their hog farms to comply with Massachusetts's requirements only to find New York enacting a law imposing larger housing requirements per pig," the brief said.

Federal lawmakers have pushed for several years to pass versions of the Ending Agricultural Trade Suppression, or EATS, act to prohibit individual states and local governments from enacting laws that would impose "a standard or condition on the preharvest production of any agricultural products," sold across state lines.

The bill was introduced in 2023 by Republican Kansas Sen. Roger Marshall, with co-sponsors including Sen. Joni Ernst and Sen. Chuck Grassley of Iowa.

The House Agriculture Committee's website on the 2024 Farm Bill lists a similar "legislative solution" to Proposition 12 and similar state laws.

Congress failed to pass a new Farm Bill before its Sept. 30 expiration, due to disagreements on funding. Lawmakers could pass a new Farm Bill when they return Nov. 12.

Attorneys general from Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Missouri, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, New Hampshire, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Virginia, West Virginia and Wyoming, are listed on the recent brief led by Bird.

Cami Koons is an Iowa Capital Dispatch reporter covering agriculture and the environment. She previously worked at publications in Kansas and Missouri, covering rural affairs.



Hogs on the farm of Gordon and Jeanine Lockie on April 28, 2009, in Elma, Iowa. (Scott Olson/Getty Images)

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Congress left D.C. with little done. They'll be back Nov. 12 to give it another try.

Thune says the lame-duck session will be 'shaped by what happens in November.'

BY: JENNIFER SHUTT - OCTOBER 3, 2024 1:49 PM

WASHINGTON — Members of Congress left Capitol Hill last week to focus their attention on the campaign trail during the six weeks leading up to Election Day, leaving much of their work unfinished.

The Republican House and Democratic Senate are scheduled to remain on recess until Nov. 12, though the urgent needs created in the wake of Hurricane Helene, which are fully funded for the moment, could bring the chambers back into session before then.

When lawmakers do return to Washington, D.C., they'll need to address the must-pass legislation they've left on autopilot instead of negotiating new bipartisan compromises.

So far this year, lawmakers have pushed off reaching brokering agreement on must-pass measures like the farm bill as well as this year's batch of government funding bills and the annual defense policy legislation.

Kids' online safety, radiation exposure

There are also a handful of measures that have passed one chamber with broad bipartisan support, but haven't been taken up on the other side of the Capitol that leadership could decide to move forward during November or December.

For example, an interesting combination of senators, led by Connecticut Democrat Richard Blumenthal and Tennessee Republican Marsha Blackburn, are advocating for House Republican leaders to hold votes on a pair of online safety bills designed to better protect children from the darker side of the internet.

The rail safety bill drafted by a bipartisan group of senators from Ohio and Pennsylvania after the train derailment in East Palestine remains unaddressed following more than a year of intransigence.

And legislation to reauthorize the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act, or RECA, which passed the Senate on a broadly bipartisan vote earlier this year, sits on a shelf collecting dust in the House.

Cancer victims, Indigenous communities and many others have pressed House GOP leadership to hold a vote to reauthorize the program after it expired this summer, but they have avoided it due to cost.

Thune: 'Hard to say' what will happen during lame duck

Lawmakers interviewed by States Newsroom and congressional leaders all indicated the outcome of the November elections will have significant sway on what Congress approves during the five-week lame-duck session that spans November and December.

All interviews took place before Hurricane Helene made landfall and Israel was directly attacked by Iran, both of which are likely to be at the top of congressional leaders' to-do lists.



U.S. Senate Minority Whip Sen. John Thune, R-South Dakota, speaks to members of the press as, from left, Sen. Steven Daines, R-Montana, Sen. Shelley Moore Capito, R-West Virginia, Sen. John Barrasso, R-Wyoming, and Senate Minority Leader Sen. Mitch McConnell, R-Kentucky, listen during a news briefing after a weekly Senate Republican policy luncheon at the U.S. Capitol on May 21, 2024, in Washington, D.C. (Alex Wong/Getty Images)

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Senate Minority Whip John Thune said it's "hard to say" what, if anything, Congress will approve during the lame-duck session.

"I think a lot will be shaped by what happens in November," the South Dakota Republican said.

House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries, D-N.Y., said just a day before Hurricane Helene made landfall that Democrats would advocate for passing natural disaster response funding previously requested by the Biden administration.

"Extreme weather events are on the rise and they affect everyone — in blue states, purple states and red states," Jeffries said. "This is not a partisan issue, it's an American issue in terms of being there, in times of need for everyday Americans, who have had their lives and livelihood upended."

Other House Democratic priorities during the lame duck include approving the dozen full-year government funding bills that were supposed to be completed before Oct. 1, the defense policy bill that had the same deadline and the farm bill, which is more than a year overdue.

Missouri GOP Sen. Josh Hawley said he "sure hopes" the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act reauthorization bill reaches the president's desk before the end of the year.

He didn't rule out lobbying to attach it to a must-pass government funding bill, but said the real hurdle is House GOP leaders.

"It doesn't need help in the Senate. It just needs the House," Hawley said. "I've had good, productive conversations with Speaker (Mike) Johnson in the last few weeks, and I appreciate his personal engagement on this, and I hope that that will lead to action."

Hawley said the House allowing RECA to expire, preventing people who qualify for the program from receiving benefits, was "outrageous."

Defense priorities, farm bill

Senate Armed Services Chair Jack Reed, a Rhode Island Democrat, said staff would work during October to bridge the differences between the two chambers on the annual defense policy bill, called the National Defense Authorization Act.

Those staff-level talks will lay the foundation for Republicans and Democrats to meet once they return to Capitol Hill following the elections.

"We have to be ready when we come back to go right to the 'Big Four' meeting," he said, referring to the top leaders in both chambers. "That's our objective."

Reed said many of the differences between the House and the Senate aren't typical Defense Department policy issues per se, but are "more political, cultural, social."

Congress may begin to debate additional military and humanitarian assistance to Ukraine this year, though said that's more likely to happen next year, Reed said.

Senate Agriculture Committee Chair Debbie Stabenow, D-Mich., said she was making a "big push" for the House and Senate to reach agreement on the farm bill in the months ahead, though she cautioned talks don't actually constitute a conference.

"I wouldn't call it a conference; technically to have a conference, you have to have a bill passed by the House and a bill passed by the Senate, which will not happen," Stabenow said.

"But I believe that there is a way," Stabenow added. "I believe there's a way to get a bipartisan bill."

Arkansas Sen. John Boozman, the top Republican on the Agriculture panel, said lawmakers didn't need the election results to "start working through our disagreements" on the farm bill, adding there's some new momentum in talks.

"I think what's changed is that there is a recognition among members, all members, how difficult it is right now as a farmer," Boozman said. "So that's really what's changed in the last three or four months. It's developing a real sense of urgency for these folks."

Iowa Republican Sen. Joni Ernst said the election outcome could influence what lawmakers choose to accomplish during the lame-duck session.

"There's any number of scenarios, whether it's NDAA, whether it's farm bill, whether it's anything else,"

she said. "But it comes down to Leader Schumer." New York Democrat Chuck Schumer is the majority leader in the Senate.

Virginia Democratic Sen. Tim Kaine said he expects Congress will broker some agreement on government funding legislation and the NDAA, but not necessarily anything else.

"In an odd way, the better the Dems do on Nov. 5, the more we'll get done," Kaine said. "Because I think if the House is going to flip back to Dem, I think the Rs will say, 'Well, let's get a whole lot of stuff done before the House goes down.' So I think the better we do, the more we'll get done in the lame duck."

Kaine said if Democrats do well in the elections, they might not need to approve additional aid for Ukraine this Congress, since that funding can last into next year.

"If we don't do well in the (elections), we might need to do it in the lame duck," Kaine said. "So that'll all depend."

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.

Education: Where do Harris and Trump stand?

BY: SHAUNEEN MIRANDA - OCTOBER 3, 2024 11:22 AM

As former President Donald Trump and Vice President Kamala Harris sprint to the November finish line, one sprawling policy area has largely fallen out of the spotlight — education.

Though the respective GOP and Democratic presidential candidates have spent comparatively more time campaigning on issues such as immigration, foreign policy and the economy, their ideas surrounding K-12 and higher education vastly differ.

Trump's education platform vows to "save American education," with a focus on parental rights, universal school choice and a fight for "patriotic education" in schools.

"By increasing access to school choice, empowering parents to have a voice in their child's education, and supporting good teachers, President Trump will improve academic excellence for all students," Karoline Leavitt, Trump campaign national press secretary, said in a statement to States Newsroom.

Trump "believes students should be taught reading, writing, and math in the classroom — not gender, sex and race like the Biden Administration is pushing on our public school system," Leavitt added.

Meanwhile, the Harris campaign has largely focused on the education investments brought by the Biden-Harris administration and building on those efforts if she is elected.

"Over the past four years, the Administration has made unprecedented investments in education, including the single-largest investment in K-12 education in history, which Vice President Harris cast the tie-breaking vote to pass," Mia Ehrenberg, a campaign spokesperson, told States Newsroom.

Ehrenberg said that while Harris and her running mate, Democratic Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz, "will build on those investments and continue fighting until every student has the support and the resources they need to thrive, Republicans led by Donald Trump and his extreme Project 2025 agenda want to cut billions from local K-12 schools and eliminate the Department of Education, undermining America's students



Former President Donald Trump and Vice President Kamala Harris have widely divergent views on education. In this photo, students are shown in a classroom. (Klaus Vedfelt/Getty Images)

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and schools.”

Harris has repeatedly knocked the Heritage Foundation’s Project 2025 — a sweeping conservative agenda that includes education policy proposals like eliminating Head Start, ending time-based and occupation-based student loan forgiveness and barring teachers from using a student’s preferred pronouns different from their “biological sex” without written permission from a parent or guardian.

Trump has fiercely disavowed Project 2025, although some former members of his administration crafted the blueprint.

Closing the U.S. Department of Education

Trump has called for shutting down the U.S. Department of Education and said he wants to “move education back to the states.” The department is not the main funding source for K-12 schools, as state and local governments allocate much of those dollars.

In contrast, Harris said at the Democratic National Convention in August that “we are not going to let him eliminate the Department of Education that funds our public schools.”

Living wage for school staff; parental bill of rights

Trump’s education plan calls for creating a “new credentialing body to certify teachers who embrace patriotic values, and understand that their job is not to indoctrinate children, but to educate them.”

He also wants to implement funding boosts for schools that “abolish teacher tenure” for grades K-12 and adopt “merit pay,” establish the direct election of school principals by parents and “drastically cut” the number of school administrators.

In contrast, the Democratic Party’s 2024 platform calls for recruiting “more new teachers, paraprofessionals and school related personnel, and education support professionals, with the option for some to even start training in high school.”

The platform also aims to help “school-support staff to advance in their own careers with a living wage” and improve working conditions for teachers.

Trump also wants to give funding boosts to schools that adopt a “Parental Bill of Rights that includes complete curriculum transparency, and a form of universal school choice.”

He’s threatening to cut federal funding for schools that teach the primarily collegiate academic subject known as “critical race theory,” gender ideology or “other inappropriate racial, sexual, or political content on our children.”

The Democrats’ platform opposes “the use of private-school vouchers, tuition tax credits, opportunity scholarships, and other schemes that divert taxpayer-funded resources away from public education,” adding that “public tax dollars should never be used to discriminate.”

Title IX

Earlier this year, the Biden-Harris administration released a final rule for Title IX extending federal protections for LGBTQ+ students.

The updated regulations took effect Aug. 1, but a slew of GOP-led states challenged the measure. The legal battles have created a policy patchwork and weakened the administration’s vision for the final rule.

The updated regulations roll back Title IX changes made under the Trump administration and then-Education Secretary Betsy DeVos.

Trump vowed to terminate the updated regulations on his first day back in office if reelected.

Student debt and higher education

Harris has repeatedly touted the administration’s record on student loan forgiveness, including nearly \$170 billion in student debt relief for almost 5 million borrowers.

The administration’s most recent student loan repayment initiative came to a grinding halt in August after the U.S. Supreme Court temporarily blocked the Saving on a Valuable Education, or SAVE, plan.

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Although little is mentioned about education in Harris' extensive economic plan, the proposal makes clear that the veep will "continue working to end the unreasonable burden of student loan debt and fight to make higher education more affordable, so that college can be a ticket to the middle class."

She also plans to cut four-year degree requirements for half a million federal jobs.

Trump — who dubbed the Biden-Harris administration's student loan forgiveness efforts as "not even legal" — sought to repeal the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program during his administration.

His education platform also calls for endowing the "American Academy," a free, online university.

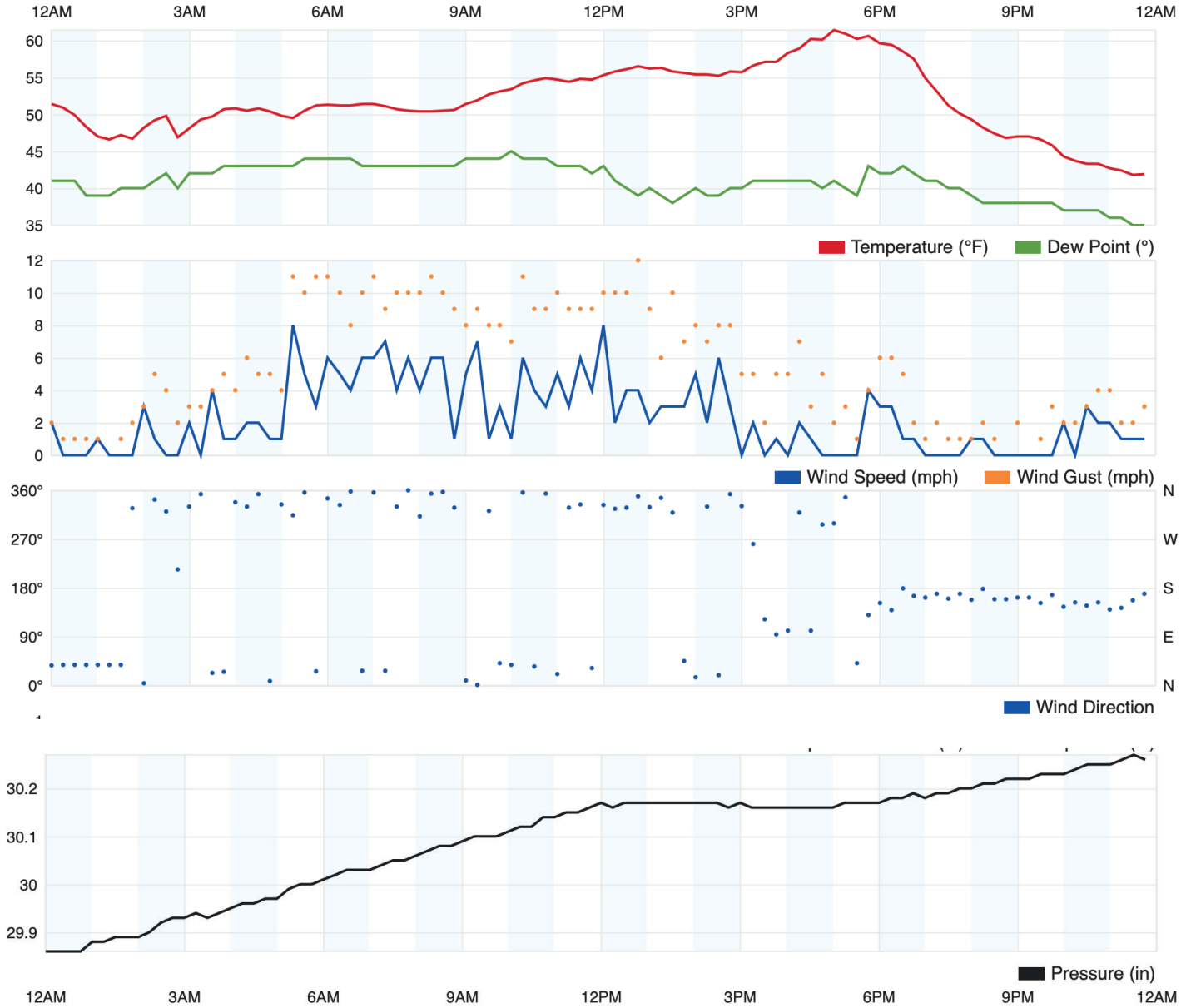
Trump said he will endow the new institution through the "billions and billions of dollars that we will collect by taxing, fining, and suing excessively large private university endowments."

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

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today	Tonight	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday
				
High: 70 °F	Low: 55 °F	High: 74 °F	Low: 44 °F	High: 66 °F
Frost then Sunny and Breezy	Mostly Clear and Breezy	Becoming Sunny and Windy	Clear	Sunny



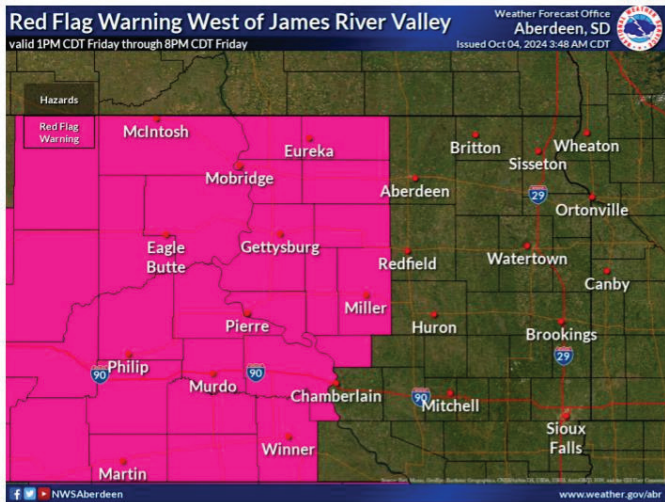
Red Flag Warning West of James River Valley

October 4, 2024
4:27 AM

Valid 1PM CDT Friday through 8PM CDT Friday

Key Messages

- Warm, Dry, and Windy conditions expected today.
- Minimum RH values between 20-30 percent.



	Minimum RH Forecast (%)												Minimum	
	11am	12pm	1pm	2pm	3pm	4pm	5pm	6pm	7pm	8pm	9pm	10pm		11pm
Aberdeen	45	37	31	27	25	23	24	27	33	36	43	43	46	23
Britton	41	31	25	24	23	23	25	26	32	40	43	43	42	23
Brookings	43	34	27	24	22	21	22	25	29	36	42	48	52	21
Chamberlain	41	34	28	26	24	24	23	25	30	35	41	44	46	23
Clark	38	32	27	24	23	22	22	24	30	35	41	43	44	22
Eagle Butte	49	42	37	32	31	28	28	31	34	37	44	44	49	28
Ellendale	46	37	30	26	25	24	25	28	32	38	43	45	47	24
Eureka	42	37	31	29	28	27	28	30	35	39	42	45	47	27
Gettsburg	49	42	37	33	30	29	29	31	37	42	50	50	50	29
Huron	47	37	31	25	23	22	22	25	28	33	39	44	46	22
Kennebec	43	34	30	27	25	25	26	26	33	37	43	47	50	25
McIntosh	48	41	36	33	32	30	31	31	34	37	46	49	51	30
Milbank	39	34	26	24	22	21	22	24	28	35	37	41	44	21
Miller	40	34	28	25	26	25	24	26	30	37	39	41	45	24
Mobridge	46	38	32	28	26	25	26	27	32	38	41	46	46	25
Murdo	46	37	31	27	26	26	25	27	29	33	40	44	45	25
Pierre	46	39	34	28	27	25	27	26	33	38	44	45	47	25
Redfield	46	36	30	26	23	22	22	23	28	33	40	42	44	22
Sisseton	36	30	26	24	23	22	23	25	30	35	40	43	42	22
Watertown	42	35	28	25	23	22	22	23	30	34	38	41	47	22
Webster	40	33	27	24	22	22	22	24	29	35	39	42	44	22
Wheaton	42	35	28	26	24	23	24	25	29	36	39	42	44	23

The combination of south winds 20 to 35 mph with gusts to 45 mph and relative humidity values as low as 20 to 30 percent this afternoon, when merged with cured fine fuels, are Red Flag conditions. These conditions are expected this afternoon. Avoid causing a fire to start, as they will be difficult to contain and extinguish.

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Region-wide Fire Weather Headlines Saturday

October 4, 2024
4:39 AM

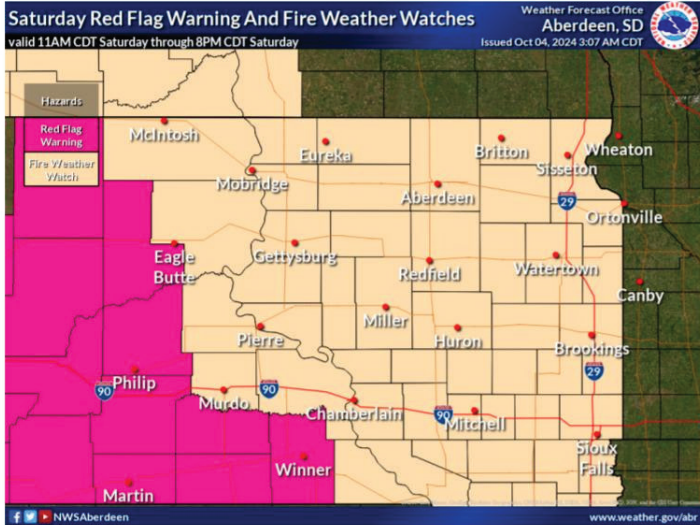
Valid 11AM-8PM CDT Saturday

Key Messages

- Warm, Dry, and Windy conditions expected Saturday.
- Minimum RH values between 15-30 percent.

Minimum RH Forecast (%)

	10/5 Sat												Minimum	
	11am	12pm	1pm	2pm	3pm	4pm	5pm	6pm	7pm	8pm	9pm	10pm		11pm
Aberdeen	44	37	30	27	25	25	26	27	29	32	35	37	38	25
Britton	49	40	33	29	27	25	26	27	29	34	37	40	42	25
Brookings	59	48	39	30	25	22	22	24	27	31	36	41	43	22
Chamberlain	32	27	24	21	19	18	19	21	23	27	33	37	39	18
Clark	53	41	33	28	26	25	26	27	29	33	36	38	39	25
Eagle Butte	35	32	29	27	25	24	25	27	28	32	36	38	40	24
Ellendale	40	35	31	29	27	26	26	28	28	32	35	38	40	26
Eureka	41	36	33	30	28	26	27	28	30	33	35	38	41	26
Gettysburg	39	35	31	29	27	25	26	27	29	33	38	41	43	25
Huron	41	32	25	22	20	19	20	22	24	28	34	39	41	19
Kennebec	31	27	24	22	21	20	21	22	24	29	33	37	39	20
McIntosh	40	36	30	28	26	25	26	27	29	31	35	39	42	25
Milbank	53	44	36	32	28	26	27	29	31	34	36	39	39	26
Miller	38	32	28	26	24	22	23	25	25	30	35	38	40	22
Mobridge	36	32	27	24	22	21	22	24	25	30	35	38	41	21
Murdo	30	26	23	21	20	18	19	20	21	25	29	32	35	18
Pierre	34	31	26	25	23	21	23	24	26	30	35	38	40	21
Redfield	43	33	26	24	22	22	23	23	25	29	33	36	38	22
Sisseton	52	42	34	30	27	24	25	26	28	31	34	36	38	24
Watertown	57	45	34	31	29	27	27	29	31	34	36	38	40	27
Webster	51	40	33	28	26	25	25	26	28	30	34	35	37	25
Wheaton	54	45	37	33	28	25	24	25	27	32	37	40	42	24



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

The combination of west winds 25 to 40 mph with gusts to 60 mph and relative humidity values as low as 15 to 30 percent Saturday afternoon, when merged with cured fine fuels, are Red Flag conditions. On Saturday, avoid causing a fire to start, as they will be difficult to contain and extinguish.



High Wind Watch Saturday

October 4, 2024
4:45 AM

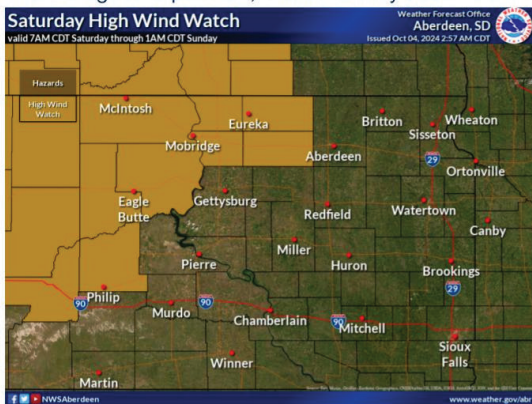
Valid 7AM CDT Saturday through 1AM CDT Sunday

Key Messages

- Behind the cold front, winds will be out of the northwest.
- Sustained speeds of 25-40 mph with gusts of 45 to 60 mph.
- Damaging winds could blow down trees and power lines. Power outages are possible, and travel may become difficult.

Maximum Wind Gust Forecast (mph)

	10/5 Sat												10/6 Sun			Maximum
	12am	3am	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	12am	3am	6am	9am	12pm			
Aberdeen	38	43	44	43	41	43	37	30	26	26	28	29	26	44		
Britton	41	46	49	45	40	44	39	35	30	31	30	31	30	49		
Brookings	31	36	39	39	35	36	32	29	23	25	28	29	29	39		
Chamberlain	36	36	37	45	45	45	36	25	23	23	28	28	28	45		
Clark	38	41	43	41	38	39	33	28	26	28	28	29	28	43		
Eagle Butte	35	35	41	52	52	51	43	33	29	28	24	23	23	52		
Ellendale	37	41	44	43	46	46	44	32	28	30	30	31	29	48		
Eureka	40	44	49	53	59	61	52	39	35	32	30	31	30	61		
Gettysburg	38	39	37	48	63	52	43	32	29	26	25	28	26	53		
Huron	35	38	40	39	38	38	32	24	24	25	25	26	25	40		
Kennebec	39	39	37	46	47	46	37	28	24	25	24	26	26	47		
McIntosh	37	39	48	56	58	59	54	39	31	28	24	23	24	59		
Milbank	25	33	37	36	36	39	35	26	26	28	28	29	29	39		
Miller	40	45	46	46	45	45	37	28	25	26	26	28	28	46		
Mobridge	41	43	38	44	46	46	41	35	32	29	25	24	24	46		
Murdo	40	40	38	46	46	46	38	28	24	23	22	22	23	46		
Pierre	35	33	35	45	45	43	36	26	23	22	22	22	22	45		
Redfield	37	39	40	38	39	39	32	25	24	25	25	26	25	40		
Sisseton	32	39	44	41	38	39	35	30	32	35	35	31	31	44		
Watertown	37	43	47	46	40	49	37	30	29	30	30	31	30	47		
Webster	40	46	49	46	43	47	43	33	33	35	33	35	33	49		
Wheaton	31	37	40	36	31	33	28	21	30	31	31	29	29	40		



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

A High Wind Watch is in effect across north central South Dakota on Saturday because west to northwest winds 25 to 40 mph with gusts 50 to 60 mph could develop behind a cold frontal passage.

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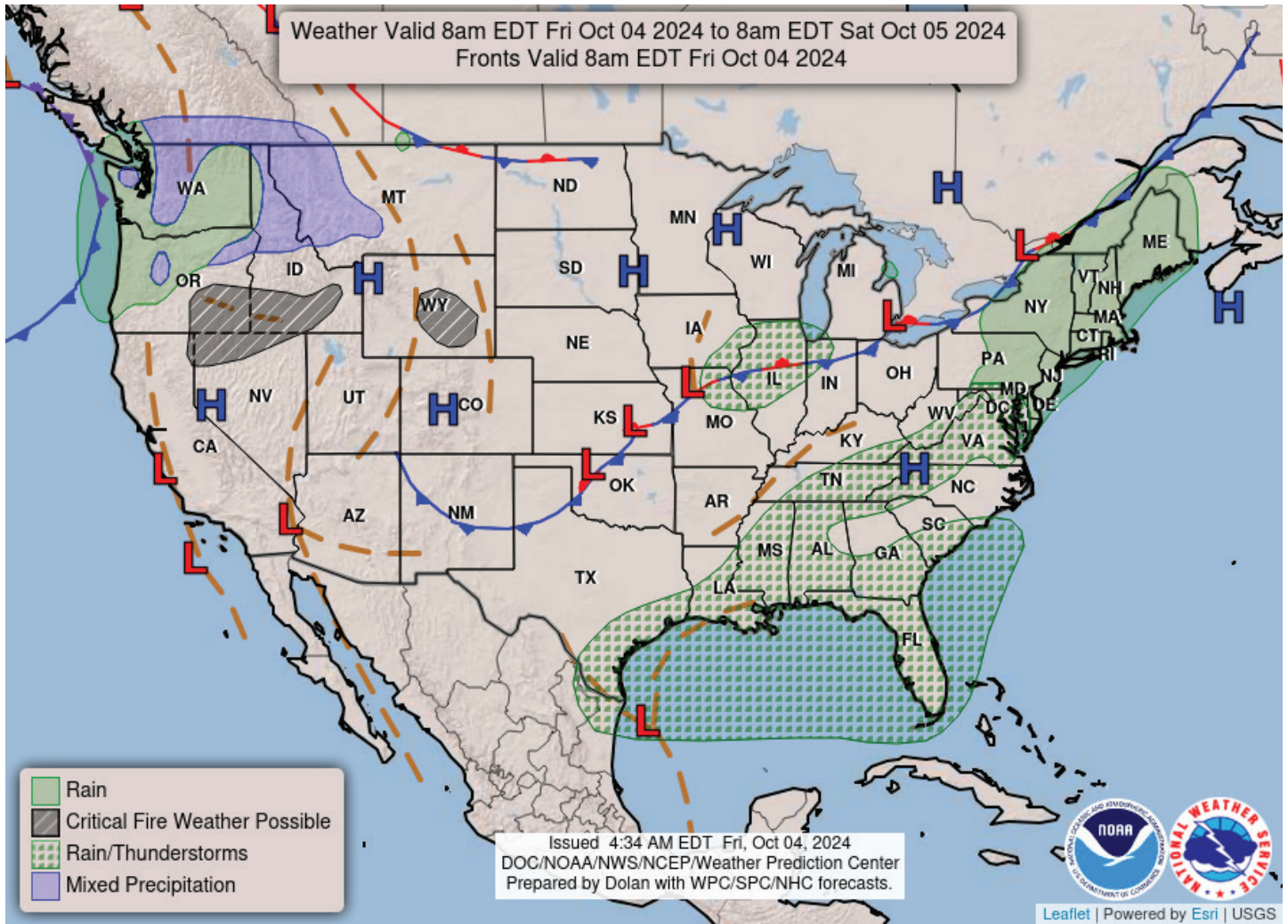
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 62 °F at 5:05 PM
Low Temp: 42 °F at 11:27 PM
Wind: 12 mph at 6:48 AM
Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 11 hours, 33 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 93 in 1975
Record Low: 13 in 1894
Average High: 66
Average Low: 39
Average Precip in Oct.: .32
Precip to date in Oct.: 0.00
Average Precip to date: 18.65
Precip Year to Date: 19.75
Sunset Tonight: 7:07:47 pm
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:35:13 am



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Today in Weather History

October 4, 2005: An intense low-pressure system developed over the Central Rockies and moved through the Northern Plains, bringing heavy snow to much of the northern Black Hills and far northwest South Dakota. Precipitation started as rain during the day and changed over to snow during the late afternoon and early evening, mixed with freezing rain and sleet. Heavy snow fell during the night and ended in the morning. Snowfall amounts were generally in the 6 to 12-inch range, with locally more substantial amounts across northern and western Harding County. The heavy, wet snow resulted in many downed trees, large branches, and power lines, which caused numerous power outages and some minor property damage. A few locations had some of the highest daily snowfall amounts ever recorded in October. Camp Crook received 12 inches of snow, which tied the daily record for snow in October. Redig also tied its record for most snowfall in one day in October with 9 inches. Lemmon had its second-highest daily total snowfall for October (6.5 inches). Bison received 6 inches, which was tied for the 3rd highest daily total in October. Spearfish tied for the 8th highest daily snow total for October with 7 inches.

1777: The Battle of Germantown was fought in a morning fog that grew denser with the smoke of battle, causing great confusion. Americans firing at each other contributed to the battle's loss.

1869 - A great storm struck New England. The storm reportedly was predicted twelve months in advance by a British officer named Saxby. Heavy rains and high floods plagued all of New England, with strong winds and high tides over New Hampshire and Maine. Canton CT was deluged with 12.35 inches of rain. (David Ludlum)

1957: The world's first artificial satellite, Sputnik, was launched on October 4th, 1957 by the Soviet Union. Sputnik was about the size of a beach ball and weighed 183.9 pounds. It took about 98 minutes to orbit Earth on an elliptical path.

1969 - Denver, CO, received 9.6 inches of snow. October of that year proved to be the coldest and snowiest of record for Denver, with a total snowfall for the month of 31.2 inches. (Weather Channel)

1986 - Excessive flooding was reported along the Mississippi River and all over the Midwest, from Ohio to the Milk River in Montana. In some places it was the worst flooding of record. (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders - 1987)

1987: A storm brought record snows to the northeastern U.S. Snowfall totals ranged up to 21 inches at North Springfield, VT. It was the earliest snow of record for some locations. The storm claimed 17 lives in central New York State, injured 332 persons, and in Vermont caused seventeen million dollars damage. The six-inch snow at Albany, NY, was their earliest measurable snow in 117 years of records.

2005: Hurricane Stan, a minimal Category 1 Hurricane with 75 mph maximum sustained surface winds, made landfall near Punta Roca Partida, Mexico, at 4 AM EDT on this day. While not a particularly strong hurricane, the torrential rains caused flooding and landslides, which resulted in 1,513 deaths in Guatemala.

2013: While western South Dakota was dealing with a crippling blizzard, the tri-state region of Nebraska, South Dakota, and Iowa saw several tornadoes, including an EF-4. This violent tornado started 2 miles southwest of Climbing Hill, Iowa, flattening corn crops and snapping tree trunks. As the tornado moved northeast, it intensified and struck a farmstead approximately 5 miles west-northwest of Correctionville, Iowa. Sheds and other buildings were severely damaged or destroyed, with the residence being severely damaged. The tornado continued to increase in both size and magnitude as it continued on its trek northeast. The tornado reached its maximum intensity 2.5 miles south of Pierson, Iowa, when this mile-wide tornado struck two farmsteads. Numerous outbuildings and barns were destroyed, with farm equipment being tossed over 400 yards. It was here that the tornado was rated EF-4. The tornado stayed southeast of Pierson, Iowa, and to the west of Washta, Iowa. Before lifting, the tornado produced more tree damage and downed power poles and lines 2 miles west of Washta, Iowa.

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HERE AND HEREAFTER

Two elderly ladies were sitting on the porch rocking and talking the day away. Said one to the other, "Sally, do you ever think of the hereafter?"

"All the time," came the reply. "Every time I go into a different room I look around and say to myself, 'What did I come here after?'"

An amusing little story that we can use to remind ourselves of one of life's most important realities: while we live in this world, we must prepare ourselves for the next. Many live as though this life will never end, or that the next one will never begin. I recall seeing a tombstone that read: "I lived all of my life expecting to die – but not this soon."

We all marvel at the persistence and power, the determination and drive that the Apostle Paul had in presenting the message of salvation. His audience would change, his location would be different, and his conditions would vary. But one fact remained constant: "The necessity to turn from sin, get closer to God every day of his life, and grow his faith in Christ as Lord."

This message is for the "newly saved" as well as the "elders of the church." There must be that moment in everyone's life when we surrender ourselves completely to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. But, there are also many other moments in life when we pause, confess our sins, repent, seek forgiveness, and prepare to meet the Lord! Are you ready to face Him?

Prayer: Thank You, Lord, for Your salvation. We want to live life knowing that we may meet You sooner than we had planned. So, convict us every day of our sins. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus. Acts 20:21

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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paypal.me/paperpaul

Pay with Venmo: [@paperpaul](https://venmo.com/paperpaul) Phone Number to Confirm: 7460

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WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:
10.01.24

27 35 47 50 66 25

MegaPlier: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$108,000,000

NEXT 16 Hrs 43 Mins
DRAW: 17 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
10.02.24

8 10 17 20 28 4

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$10,510,000

NEXT 1 Days 15 Hrs 58
DRAW: Mins 16 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
10.03.24

2 5 29 42 48 18

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT 16 Hrs 13 Mins
DRAW: 17 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
10.02.24

4 6 7 22 23

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$49,000

NEXT 1 Days 16 Hrs 13
DRAW: Mins 17 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
10.02.24

39 44 45 46 66 13

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT 1 Days 16 Hrs 42
DRAW: Mins 17 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
10.02.24

1 2 21 37 43 21

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$295,000,000

NEXT 1 Days 16 Hrs 42
DRAW: Mins 17 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 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

News from the **AP** Associated Press

Abortion-rights groups are outraising opponents 8-to-1 on November ballot measures

By GEOFF MULVIHILL Associated Press

Abortion-rights ballot measure supporters across the country have raised nearly eight times as much as groups campaigning against the amendments on the November ballots. But that advantage may not translate into a huge benefit down the stretch in Florida, the most expensive of the nine statewide campaigns to enshrine abortion rights into state constitutions.

So far, campaign finance data compiled by the watchdog group Open Secrets and analyzed by The Associated Press tells a similar story in most of those states: Amendment backers have raised multiple times as much money and have far more donors, bringing in nearly \$108 million compared to \$14 million for their opponents as of reports aggregated by Tuesday. Still, it's not a sure thing that will mean more spending to promote the measures in every state in the final weeks before the Nov. 5 elections.

"The apparent differential on campaign finance reports does nothing to reassure me that we will not see large, late spending on these campaigns," said Kelly Hall, executive director of The Fairness Project, which is providing money and other support for abortion rights groups in several of the campaigns.

The measures would roll back restrictions in some states and enshrine protections into the constitutions in others after the Supreme Court's 2022 ruling overturning *Roe v. Wade*. Most GOP-controlled states implemented bans or restrictions after the ruling. Most Democratic-controlled ones offered some protections for abortion access.

The ballot measures could also drive voter turnout in the elections.

The money goes to ads — and elsewhere

Campaigns that raise more money have an edge reaching voters with ads on TV, radio and websites, along with mailers and yard signs and more organizing power for door-knocking and other efforts.

That's evident so far in Missouri and Montana, where big funding advantages have translated into far more ad buys, according to data collected by the media tracking firm AdImpact.

In Missouri, the Open Secrets data shows abortion rights groups have raised more than \$5 million, and state filings reflect millions more in contributions, including \$1 million from former New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg. The giving has fueled over \$11 million in ad spending supporting a measure that would overturn the state's ban compared with less than \$50,000 opposing it.

In Montana, pro-amendment groups lead in ad spending, with more than \$11 million compared to under \$50,000 for opponents.

There hasn't been as much ad activity so far in Arizona, Colorado, Maryland, Nevada or South Dakota. In Nebraska, abortion opponents have raised slightly less money but have spent slightly more on ad buys. Contribution totals don't have to be reported in Nevada or South Dakota until later this month.

Supporters of the ballot measures also have some costs that opponents don't.

Getting most of the abortion questions on the ballots required signature drives, which are a major cost for their sponsors. And with most of the questions, there were legal battles over whether ballot requirements were met. Paying lawyers in those battles often falls to the groups behind the campaigns, reducing how much of the money they raise is available for reaching voters.

The costs of legal challenges often do not eat into their opponents' fundraising the same way.

The Thomas More Society, for instance, challenged initiatives in Missouri and Nebraska. The group is not required to file campaign finance reports.

And in Florida, the state attorney general challenged that state's measure, shifting legal expenses to taxpayers.

Florida's opposition has help from the GOP — and the state government

Florida's race has some other unique wrinkles.

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For one, adopting the measure requires approval from 60% of voters, compared to lesser thresholds needed in other states.

If approved, Florida's amendment would make abortions legal until the fetus is viable, or when necessary to protect the patient's health, as determined by a health care provider. Florida currently bans most abortions after six weeks, with some exceptions.

Abortion rights groups have reported raising more than \$60 million and opponents \$9 million. But that does not reflect all of the spending.

The state Republican Party has aired commercials urging voters to defeat the amendment. AdImpact data shows the GOP has spent \$9.6 million running TV and online ads. That's about half the \$20.7 million bought by groups backing the amendment. But using an industry calculation for how many people see TV ads, it puts the ballot measure's opponents ahead.

Even that spending doesn't include another boost for the argument that the amendment goes too far. A state government website states, "Amendment 4 threatens women's safety." Advocates sued last month to stop the taxpayer-funded messaging. A judge ruled Monday that the website could remain up.

Contributors include big names with deep pockets, along with smaller donors

Peter Northcutt, director for state strategies at National Right to Life, portrays the anti-abortion movement as an underdog up against funding from those with a financial interest in abortion.

"The abortion industry and their allies bring massive funds to the table," he said. "Those who are trying to fight off these extreme amendments have an uphill climb."

Planned Parenthood Federation of America and some of its regional affiliates are among those who have kicked in more than \$1 million to support the amendments. But the biggest donor so far is Marsha Zlatin Laufer, a frequent contributor to liberal causes. She's given more than \$9 million in Florida.

Other abortion-rights groups that have given more than \$1 million in multiple states include the Sixteen Thirty Fund, The Fairness Project and Advocacy Action Fund, which aren't required to disclose their donors, as well as the George Soros-connected Open Society Action Fund.

Nationally, the abortion rights side also has far more donors: More than 94,000 to fewer than 2,600.

On the opposing side, the big individual contributors are U.S. Sen. Pete Ricketts, a Nebraska Republican, and his mother, Marlene Ricketts. Each of them has given at least \$1 million in Nebraska. Nebraska is the one state where campaign finance filings show the two sides have raised similar amounts of money, with both between \$3 million and \$4 million.

There's a reason for that: Nebraska has competing ballot measures. One would expand access to abortion and the other would enshrine the current ban on most abortions after the first 12 weeks of pregnancy.

Some big anti-abortion groups haven't put cash in the races

The fundraising gap is partly explained by the fact that two big national organizations that together spent about \$40 million trying to defeat a similar campaign last year in Ohio have not gotten heavily involved in campaign funding this year.

One is The Concord Fund, which spent more than \$25 million in Ohio last year – more than 40% of the total in opposition to the amendment. Like abortion-related ballot measures in six other states since 2022, the abortion-rights side prevailed.

The group, formerly known as the Judicial Crisis Network, is part of a network of political groups centered around Leonard Leo, a prominent conservative legal activist and driving force in securing nominations of conservative Supreme Court justices who voted to overturn Roe v. Wade.

The other is Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America, which contributed nearly \$15 million in Ohio last year. The group said it planned to raise \$92 million for political campaigns this year, but the focus was not on abortion-related measures. Instead, it said it would prioritize helping Republicans win the presidency and Congress.

Neither organization commented for this article.

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Thursday's Scores

The Associated Press

PREP VOLLEYBALL=

Aberdeen Central High School def. Brandon Valley, 26-24, 25-13, 25-15

Aberdeen Roncalli def. Clark-Willow Lake, 25-17, 25-21, 27-25

Baltic def. Viborg-Hurley, 25-13, 25-9, 25-21

Bennett County def. Hot Springs, 22-25, 22-25, 25-21, 26-24, 15-9

Boyd County, Neb. def. Burke, 25-17, 25-6, 25-13

Bridgewater-Emery def. Wessington Springs, 25-19, 25-18, 25-7

Canistota def. Howard, 25-18, 25-16, 25-15

Centerville def. Irene-Wakonda, 25-18, 25-23, 25-13

Chester def. Beresford, 25-9, 25-12, 25-12

Colman-Egan def. Castlewood, 21-25, 25-20, 22-25, 27-25, 15-6

Corsica/Stickney def. Tripp-Delmont-Armour, 25-23, 25-16, 25-18

DeSmet def. Estelline-Hendricks, 25-13, 24-26, 22-25, 25-21, 15-13

Dell Rapids St Mary def. Iroquois-Lake Preston, 25-14, 25-12, 25-20

Dell Rapids def. Lennox, 25-15, 23-25, 25-15, 25-21

Deubrook def. Oldham-Ramona-Rutland, 21-25, 25-17, 25-21, 25-12

Douglas def. Sturgis Brown High School, 26-24, 20-25, 26-24

Elk Point-Jefferson def. Wagner, 25-19, 25-18, 25-23

Elkton-Lake Benton def. Arlington, 25-16, 25-16, 25-17

Ethan def. Freeman, 25-18, 22-25, 25-12, 25-15

Faith def. Harding County, 25-21, 25-13, 25-23

Faulkton def. Aberdeen Christian, 25-19, 20-25, 21-25, 25-20, 15-7

Florence-Henry def. Tri-State, N.D., 25-16, 25-17, 25-14

Great Plains Lutheran def. Deuel, 25-13, 25-13, 25-8

Gregory def. Chamberlain, 25-20, 25-13, 25-21

Hamlin def. Redfield, 25-18, 25-9, 25-19

Hanson def. Kimball-White Lake, 25-15, 25-20, 25-22

Harrisburg def. Sioux Falls Jefferson, 25-19, 25-22, 26-24

Ipswich def. Potter County, 22-25, 25-22, 25-18, 25-21

Kadoka def. Jones County, 25-8, 25-15, 25-8

Langford def. Waubay/Summit, 25-11, 26-24, 28-30, 25-16

Marshall, Minn. def. Brookings, 25-23, 25-10, 25-22

Menno def. Bon Homme, 25-20, 25-13, 23-25, 29-27

Milbank def. Britton-Hecla, 24-26, 25-17, 25-15, 15-12

Miller def. Parkston, 20-25, 25-16, 25-20, 25-14

Mobridge-Pollock def. Stanley County, 25-12, 25-14, 25-13

Mt. Vernon/Plankinton def. Winner, 25-11, 27-25, 25-20

North Central def. Strasburg, N.D., 25-6, 25-17, 25-18

Platte-Geddes def. Lyman, 25-16, 25-21, 13-25, 23-25, 15-5

Sanborn Central-Woonsocket def. James Valley Christian, 25-6, 26-24, 25-15

Sioux Falls Lincoln def. Huron, 25-10, 25-21, 26-24

Sioux Falls Roosevelt def. Mitchell, 23-25, 25-19, 25-13, 25-14

Sioux Falls Washington def. Tea, 25-12, 25-14, 25-12

St Thomas More def. Mahpiya Luta Red Cloud, 25-12, 25-12, 25-5

Tri-Valley def. McCook Central-Montrose, 25-15, 25-18, 26-24

Wall def. Newell, 25-12, 21-25, 13-25, 25-20, 15-5

Warner def. Herreid-Selby, 25-16, 25-18, 25-2

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Dakota Valley Triangular=
Dakota Valley def. Ponca, Neb., 25-23, 25-11, 25-15
Pierce, Neb. def. Dakota Valley, 25-22, 16-25, 25-19, 25-15

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

Thursday's Scores

The Associated Press
PREP FOOTBALL=
Lower Brule 50, Tiospa Zina 0
Marty 52, Flandreau Indian 6
Omaha Nation, Neb. 62, Crow Creek Tribal School 8
Todd County 42, Cheyenne-Eagle Butte/Tiospaye Topa 28
White River 52, Crazy Horse 0
POSTPONEMENTS AND CANCELLATIONS=
Winnebago, Neb. vs. Little Wound, ccd.

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

Taxpayers in 24 states will be able to file their returns directly with the IRS in 2025

By FATIMA HUSSEIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The IRS is expanding its program that allows people to file their taxes directly with the agency for free.

The federal tax collector's Direct File program, which allows taxpayers to calculate and submit their returns to the government directly without using commercial tax preparation software, will be open to more than 30 million people in 24 states in the 2025 filing season.

The program was rolled out as a pilot during the 2024 tax season in 12 states.

Now IRS Commissioner Daniel Werfel says the program will be permanent and the IRS will expand eligibility opportunities for taxpayers.

"We're announcing significant expansions of Direct File that will make the service available to millions more taxpayers in 2025," Werfel said on a call Thursday with reporters. He said it is possible that additional states could still choose to join the program in 2025.

The pilot program in 2024 allowed people in certain states with very simple W-2s to calculate and submit their returns directly to the IRS. Those using the program claimed more than \$90 million in refunds, the IRS said.

It was originally available to certain taxpayers in California, New York, Arizona, Florida, New Hampshire, Nevada, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Washington, Wyoming and Massachusetts.

States to be added in 2025 include: Alaska, Connecticut, Idaho, Kansas, Maine, Maryland, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin.

In addition, new eligibility standards will allow participation by taxpayers with 1099 income and credits including the Child and Dependent Care Credit, Retirement Savings Contributions Credit, and the deduction for Health Savings Accounts, among others.

"Other countries have been providing their citizens with the ability to do this type of thing for years," Treasury Deputy Secretary Wally Adeyemo said on the call with reporters. Several nations in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, including Germany and Japan, have similar systems with prepopulated tax forms.

The direct file idea is not viewed favorably by the commercial tax prep software firms that have made

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billions of dollars from charging people to use their software.

Additionally, an IRS inspector general report released this week notes that the IRS has not maintained sufficient safeguards over data protection related to the IRS Free File Alliance. The alliance is a longstanding agreement between the IRS and some commercial tax preparation companies to provide free tax prep services to low and middle-income taxpayers.

The Free File Alliance is separate from the Direct File program.

The IRS was tasked with looking into how to create a "direct file" system as part of the money it received from the Inflation Reduction Act signed into law by President Joe Biden in 2022. It gave the IRS nine months and \$15 million to report on how such a program would work.

Middle East latest: An Israeli airstrike cuts a major highway linking Lebanon with Syria

By The Associated Press undefined

An Israeli airstrike has cut off a main highway linking Lebanon with Syria, leaving two huge craters on either side of the road.

The airstrike Friday rendered the road unusable for cars, leaving people to go on foot to the Masnaa Border Crossing where tens of thousands of people fleeing war in Lebanon have crossed into Syria over the past two weeks.

On Tuesday, Israel began a ground incursion into Lebanon against the Hezbollah militant group while also conducting strikes in Gaza. The Israeli military said nine soldiers have died in the conflict in southern Lebanon.

Israel and Hezbollah have traded fire across the Lebanon border almost daily since the day after Hamas' cross-border attack on Oct. 7, 2023, which killed 1,200 Israelis and took 250 others hostage. Israel declared war on the Hamas militant group in the Gaza Strip in response. More than 41,000 Palestinians have been killed in the territory, and just over half the dead have been women and children, according to local health officials. Nearly 2,000 people have been killed in Lebanon since then, most of them since Sept. 23, according to the Lebanese Health Ministry.

Here is the latest:

Iran's leader praises missile strike on Israel in a speech at Friday prayers

TEHRAN, Iran — Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei praised the country's recent missile strike on Israel, state TV reported Friday.

Khamenei was leading Friday prayers and was to deliver a rare public sermon in the Iranian capital, Tehran, that was being watched for signs of what Iran might plan next.

In a 40-minute speech, he praised Tuesday's missile barrage against Israel as a shining job by Iranian armed forces. "It will be done in the future again if it becomes necessary," he said.

There was a commemoration ceremony for the late Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah beforehand. Most high-ranking Iranian officials, including President Masoud Pezeshkian and the Revolutionary Guard's top generals, attended the ceremony.

Iran is Hezbollah's main backer and has sent weapons and billions of dollars to the group over the years.

Also on Friday, Iran's foreign minister Abbas Araghchi arrived in Beirut, where he was expected to discuss the ongoing war between Israel and Hezbollah with Lebanese officials. Spokesperson Esmail Baghaei said Iran sent its first shipment of aid to Lebanon, including 10 tons of food and medicine.

Japan prepares to evacuate citizens from Lebanon, urging nationals in Iran to leave, too

TOKYO — As Japan prepared to evacuate its citizens from Lebanon, the government also urged those in Iran to leave as soon as possible, while commercial flights are still operating.

Foreign Minister Takeshi Iwaya told reporters Friday that Japan's embassy in Iran renewed its safety advisory to Japanese nationals this week after Iran fired missiles into Israel.

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On Thursday, the Japanese Defense Ministry dispatched two C-2 transport aircraft to Jordan to stand by for an evacuation of about 50 Japanese nationals from Lebanon. Iwaya said the government has not decided whether to also dispatch defense aircraft to Iran, where about 440 Japanese citizens are based, but "we will do our utmost so that we can respond to any contingency in order to protect the safety of Japanese citizens."

Iran's foreign minister is in Beirut to meet with Lebanese officials

BEIRUT — Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi arrived in Beirut where he will discuss with Lebanese officials the ongoing war between Israel and Hezbollah.

Iran is the main backer of Hezbollah and has sent weapons and billions of dollars to the group over the years.

The Iranian official arrived in Lebanon as Israel launched new airstrikes on different parts of Lebanon, including Beirut's southern suburb, south Lebanon, and the eastern Bekaa Valley.

Araghchi's visit to Beirut came after Iran launched at least 180 missiles Tuesday into Israel, part of a series of rapidly escalating attacks that threaten to push the Middle East closer to a regionwide war.

Israeli strike cuts a main highway linking Lebanon with Syria

BEIRUT — Lebanon's state-run National News Agency says an Israeli airstrike has cut a main highway linking Lebanon with Syria.

The agency gave no further details about Friday's airstrike that led to the closure of a road near the Masnaa Border Crossing, from where tens of thousands of people fleeing war in Lebanon have crossed into Syria over the past two weeks. It's the first time this major border crossing has been cut off since the beginning of the war.

Lebanese General Security recorded more than 250,000 Syrian citizens and over 80,000 Lebanese citizens crossing into Syrian territory during the last week of September, after Israel launched a heavy bombardment of southern and eastern Lebanon.

Dama Post, a pro-government Syrian media outlet, said Israeli warplanes fired two missiles and damaged the road between Masnaa Border Crossing in Lebanon and the Syrian crossing point of Jdeidet Yabous.

There are half a dozen border crossings between the two countries and most of them remain open. Lebanon's minister of public works said all border crossings between Lebanon and Syria work under the supervision of the state.

Hezbollah is believed to have received much of its weapons from Iran via Syria. The Lebanese group has a presence on both sides of the border where it fights alongside Syrian President Bashar Assad's forces.

Australia's prime minister condemns comments by Iranian ambassador praising Hezbollah's slain leader
SYDNEY — Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese on Friday condemned the Iranian ambassador's comments praising a recently slain Hezbollah leader, but rejected opposition advice to expel the envoy.

Ambassador Ahmad Sadeghi described Hezbollah Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah, who was killed by an Israeli missile strike in September in Lebanon, as a "remarkable leader" on social media.

"The government condemns any support for terrorist organizations such as Hezbollah. We condemn the ambassador's comments," Albanese told reporters in Sydney.

"Australia has maintained a relationship with Iran since 1968 that has been continuous. Not because we agree with the regime, but because it's in Australia's national interest," Albanese added.

Opposition leader Peter Dutton, who could become prime minister at elections due by May, called for Sadeghi to be expelled over his post. Dutton described Sadeghi's words as "completely and utterly at odds with what is in our country's best interests."

Sadeghi did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Friday.

Australia officially rebuked Sadeghi in August for endorsing Hamas spiritual leader Ahmed Yassin's hope that "wiping out the Zionist plague out of the holy lands of Palestine happens no later than 2027."

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Death threats assail Brazil's trailblazing trans candidates as they campaign

By ELÉONORE HUGHES and HANNAH-KATHRYN VALLES Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP) — Benny Briolly beamed as she strode through the concrete favela alleyway in a snow-white dress, volunteers proudly waving campaign flags emblazoned with her face.

The city councilwoman and nearly 1,000 other transgender politicians are running Sunday in every one of Brazil's 26 states, according to the nation's electoral court, which is tracking them for the first time. The number of candidacies has tripled since the last local elections four years ago, when trans rights group Antra mapped them.

As trans people have set their sights on political office, many have been met with intimidation efforts bent on turning them away, including a candidate in Brazil's biggest city who survived an assassination attempt last week.

Trans advocates report record deaths in Brazil

More trans people — 100 — were murdered in Brazil last year than in any other country, according to Transgender Europe, a network of global non-profits that tracks the data. Those precise statistics are almost certainly driven by a combination of poor reporting elsewhere and Brazil's active network of advocates, but experts agree that transphobia is ubiquitous.

On International Women's Day last year, Nikolas Ferreira — the federal lawmaker who received more votes than any other — donned a blond wig in Congress' lower house. He said it allowed him to speak as a woman and denounce trans people.

In 2022 Rio state lawmaker Rodrigo Amorim called Briolly "an aberration of nature" in the state's legislature.

Such tactics rally voters by portraying trans people as a menace to be courageously fought, according to Ligia Fabris, a gender and law specialist and a visiting professor at Yale University.

Legacy of a far-right president for trans politicians

Both Amorim and Ferreira were staunch allies of far-right former President Jair Bolsonaro.

Transgender politician Leonora Áquilla, a candidate for city council in Sao Paulo this year, said that Bolsonaro had inflamed transphobia and that she has had to stare down people shouting death threats to her face.

Bolsonaro lost his re-election bid to leftist Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva in 2022 but transphobia has far from retreated.

Since entering the public eye, Briolly has received over 700 death threats. Some have included the address of her home in Rio de Janeiro's metro area and warnings that she would suffer the same fate as city councilwoman Marielle Franco, a champion for LGBTQ+ rights who was gunned down in 2018. That threat prompted the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights to demand that Brazil provide Briolly protection.

She won't be scared off her reelection bid even though some may want her dead.

"When we get into politics, our bodies become threats and we become constant targets," Briolly told the Associated Press, with the city of Niteroi — across the bay from Rio — stretching out behind her. "Our bodies are revolutionary, are daring ... they are bodies that emanate hope to all those who were left behind."

An armed escort and a bulletproof vest

Áquilla narrowly escaped an assassination attempt on Sept. 26. She was in northern Sao Paulo on her way to look into reports of transphobia when a motorcycle deliberately slammed into her car. When she got out, the driver revved his engine, and instinctively she ducked. The bullet from his gun missed her, and he fired more shots as she lay there, pretending to be dead. He escaped and Áquilla has ceased in-person campaigning.

"There have been so many threats they became banal; we never thought it would happen. I'm completely in shock. I'm taking a sedative, because I can't control my nervousness, my anxiety," she said in a video call. "Right on the eve of the election, the moment when I most need to be on the streets, they're trying to silence me."

Duda Salabert, who is running for mayor in Brazil's sixth biggest city, Belo Horizonte, made history in

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2022 when elected alongside another trans woman to Brazil's lower house of Congress. Their victories were widely regarded as a breakthrough for trans representation, but Salabert said that during that campaign she received death threats daily.

"I had to walk with an armed escort ... I had to vote with a bulletproof vest, according to police instructions, and I couldn't go into large crowds because I risked being attacked," she said.

This year, Salabert said she is seeking to become the first trans mayor of a major city in Latin America.

"It's a joy, because we're making history, but it's sad because our candidacy highlights the entire history of exclusion, violence and alienation of the transvestite and transgender community from electoral processes in Brazil and Latin America," she said in a video call.

Positive changes accompany the violence and fear

Indianarae Siqueira, a transgender sex worker and longtime activist running to be a city councilor in Rio, says that increasingly seeing trans people occupy places of power has had a snowball effect.

"Those who managed to win and are there — I think this is a reference and gives incentive so that people want to enter (politics)," she said during an interview on the steps leading to Rio's municipal assembly.

Back in the Niteroi favela, Briolly agreed that there's an element of joy to playing an active role in politics, even amid the threats.

"For me, it's pride — a latent, powerful pride — that grows more and more in my heart and in the heart of each and every person who believes that my body and my voice are just a reflection, an empowerment of the collective struggle," she said. "When a Black trans woman moves, she moves the whole of society."

Israeli airstrikes rock southern suburbs of Beirut and cut off a key crossing into Syria

By BASSEM MROUE Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Israel carried out a series of massive airstrikes overnight in southern suburbs of Beirut and another that cut off the main border crossing between Lebanon and Syria.

The new wave of strikes came after Israel warned people to evacuate communities in southern Lebanon that are outside a United Nations-declared buffer zone, as the yearlong conflict between Israel and the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah escalates.

Israel launched a ground incursion into Lebanon on Tuesday and its forces have been clashing with Hezbollah militants in a narrow strip along the border. A series of attacks before the incursion killed some of the group's key members, including longtime leader Hassan Nasrallah.

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi arrived on Friday in Beirut, where he was expected to discuss the war between Israel and Hezbollah with Lebanese officials.

Araghchi's visit to Beirut came three days after Iran launched at least 180 missiles into Israel, the latest in a series of rapidly escalating attacks between Israel and Iran and its Arab allies that threatens to push the Middle East closer to a regionwide war.

Iran is Hezbollah's main backer and over the years has sent weapons and billions of dollars to the group.

The blasts overnight rocked Beirut's southern suburbs, sending huge plumes of smoke and flames into the night sky and shaking buildings kilometers (miles) away in the Lebanese capital. The Israeli military did not immediately comment on what the intended target was, and there was no information immediately available on casualties.

Lebanon's state-run National News Agency reported that there were more than 10 consecutive airstrikes in the area late Thursday.

The agency also reported that an Israeli airstrike led to the closure of the road near the busy Masnaa Border Crossing, from which tens of thousands of people fleeing war in Lebanon have crossed into Syria over the past two weeks.

Associated Press video footage showed that the strikes left two huge craters on each side of the road. People carrying bags were seen crossing on foot after being dropped off by cars that were unable to pass the site of the airstrike.

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The airstrike that cut the busiest border crossing between the two countries came a day after an Israeli military spokesperson said Hezbollah has been trying to transport military equipment through the border crossing.

Hezbollah is believed to have received much of its weaponry from Iran via Syria. The group has a presence on both sides of the border, a region where it has been fighting alongside Syrian President Bashar Assad's forces.

Dama Post, a pro-government Syrian media outlet, said Israeli warplanes fired two missiles, damaging the road between the Masnaa crossing in Lebanon and the Syrian crossing point of Jdeidet Yabous.

It was the first time this major border crossing has been cut since the beginning of the war. Lebanese General Security recorded 256,614 Syrian citizens and 82,264 Lebanese citizens crossing into Syrian territory between Sept. 23 — when the Israel launched a heavy bombardment of southern and eastern Lebanon — and Sept. 30.

There are half a dozen border crossings between the two countries and most of them remain open. Lebanon's minister of public works said all border crossings between Lebanon and Syria work under the supervision of the state.

Israel and Hezbollah have traded fire across Lebanon's southern border almost daily since the day after Hamas' cross-border attack on Oct. 7, 2023, in which the militants killed 1,200 Israelis and took 250 others hostage.

Meanwhile, the Israeli army said it carried out a strike Thursday in Tulkarem, a militant stronghold in the occupied West Bank, in coordination with the Shin Bet internal security service.

The Palestinian Health Ministry said 18 people were killed in an Israeli strike on a refugee camp there.

Violence has flared across the Israeli-occupied territory since the Israel-Hamas war erupted in October 2023. Tulkarem and other northern cities have seen some of the worst violence.

Israel declared war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip in response to their Oct. 7 attack. More than 41,000 Palestinians have since been killed in the territory, and just over half the dead have been women and children, according to local health officials. Nearly 2,000 people have been killed in Lebanon in that time, most of them since Sept. 23, according to the Lebanese Health Ministry.

Work and travel resume across Taiwan after Typhoon Krathon finally dissipates

By SIMINA MISTREANU Associated Press

KAOHSIUNG, Taiwan (AP) — Work, classes and flights resumed across Taiwan on Friday after Typhoon Krathon brought torrential rainfall to the island but finally dissipated over a mountain range.

A heavy rain advisory remained in place for the northern coast and mountainous areas, where two landslides occurred early Friday.

Krathon had brought much of the island to a standstill for three days but weakened to a tropical depression early Friday. Its center moved back over the sea after making a "U-turn" across the island's southwestern tip overnight.

Schools and businesses reopened with the exception of the city of Kaohsiung, Pingtung County, and some parts of Hualien County and New Taipei. Domestic flights, which had been grounded for two days, resumed.

Krathon lashed Kaohsiung with winds up to 126 kph (78 mph) and higher gusts. It felled trees and flooded roads. Heavy rains and flooding also occurred along Taiwan's southern and eastern coasts. Mountainous Taitung County saw 171 centimeters (5.6 feet) of rain over six days.

Two people died earlier in the week and one person remained missing, according to Taiwan's fire department. The missing person was swept off a bridge.

Authorities had expected Krathon to bring devastation comparable to a major typhoon that swept Kaohsiung in 1977, causing 37 deaths.

But it lost steam shortly after making landfall in Kaohsiung and reaching the mountains northeast of the city, according to the Central Weather Administration.

Krathon was one of only two typhoons in recent history to "die" over Taiwan, beside Typhoon Trami, in 2001, the weather agency said.

Did this happen to me also? Korean adoptees question their past and ask how to find their families

By CLAIRE GALOFARO and KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — Dozens of South Korean adoptees, many in tears, have responded to an investigation led by The Associated Press and documented by Frontline (PBS) last week on Korean adoptions. The investigation reported dubious child-gathering practices and fraudulent paperwork involving South Korea's foreign adoption program, which peaked in the 1970s and '80s amid huge Western demands for babies.

Here are some of the problems adoptees who responded say they faced, along with tips for finding histories and birth families.

KYLA POSTREL — Adoption paperwork tells multiple stories

Kyla Postrel's paperwork tells two different stories, neither of which she's sure is true.

After a DNA test last year, Postrel found a half-brother who was also adopted to the West. Comparing their paperwork made her even more skeptical of the stories they'd been told. But part of her is reluctant to keep looking "for something that may or may not exist and could be absolutely devastating."

She has been flooded with messages from other adoptees looking for help, and tells them not to be disappointed if they can't track down their stories.

"I just don't want any adoptees feeling like their life is a lie," she says. "Their life is everything that they've built since then."

If her birth mother is still out there, Postrel would want her to know her daughter has had a good life.

CODY DUET — Not enough information in the file

Cody Duet, adopted to rural Louisiana in 1986, requested his full file a decade ago. He got back less than one page, saying his mother was a young factory worker, his father was unknown and there was nothing more they were required to give him.

"It was probably one of the most angry moments in my life," Duet says. "Who are you to tell me that I don't get to know who I am?"

He fell into a depression and couldn't sleep. He struggled with abandonment, like he was easy to get rid of, easy not to love. But now, he wonders, was that story even true?

The AP investigation found that children were systemically listed as abandoned, even though researchers have found that the vast majority had known relatives.

Now Duet wants to resume his search. He wants to find his mother, to tell her he's reached a point in his life that he's proud of.

AMY McFADDEN — Some adoptees don't know what to believe

Amy McFadden always believed what the adoption agency told her parents — that she was abandoned on a staircase at 5 weeks old.

Adopted to the United States in 1975, she'd heard stories about fraudulent adoptions, but always thought of them as one-off problems that had nothing to do with her. She's grateful for her American life and close to her adoptive parents, and never felt the longing so many other adoptees do to reconnect with their roots.

But when she found out from the AP stories that mothers in South Korea have searched for their missing children for decades, she says, she was in shock for three days. Waves of nausea radiated over her.

She wants to submit her DNA, in case a family has been looking for her.

CALLIE CHAMBERLAIN — Not everyone has a happy ending

For Callie Chamberlain, waiting for word on whether her birth parents wanted to connect felt like standing on the edge of a cliff.

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Her original documents said her mother was young, unmarried and uneducated, she says. Her full files from the South Korean agency contained a different story: Her mother was married and she was born of an affair. DNA testing showed both stories were untrue, and identified her mother and father as married both back then and now.

When they connected, her mother said she'd nearly died giving birth. The family was poor. Disoriented from labor and medications, her mother said she only vaguely remembered hospital staff insisting she was very sick and the child deserved a better home. The baby disappeared the next day. She lived with that shame for years, and the entire family searched for Chamberlain.

They have now invited her — and her adoptive family — with open arms. But Chamberlain has met many without such happy endings, and feels a sort of survivor's guilt. She also questions the belief that reunions will answer all questions and make you whole.

"There is so much grief and there's so much sorrow," she says. "There's this sense of death. And then there's also so much that gets to be born. It's an ancestral sorrow that I can feel sometimes, like this wasn't supposed to happen."

She has learned of a Korean cultural concept called "han," an existential and endless grief, born from colonization, war, poverty and the line that cleaves Korea into North and South, splitting families for generations. "That's something we experience too," she said. "We are Koreans."

Here are some steps Korean adoptees could take to learn more about their past:

Do birth family searches

Adoptees can first request information from their adoption agencies. If they don't get results from agencies, they can contact the South Korean government's National Center for the Rights of the Child as a second step.

Birth searches can take months and aren't always successful. Less than a fifth of 15,000 adoptees who have asked the government for help with family searches since 2012 have managed to reunite with relatives, according to data obtained by AP. Failures are often caused by inaccurate records or the practice of describing children as abandoned even when they had known parents.

Many adoptees also criticize the consent process for reunions. Adoption agencies and the NCRC can only use traditional mail, and only up to three times per search, to contact birth parents for their consent to provide personal details to adoptees and meet them. Privacy laws prevent agency and NCRC workers from accessing birth parents' phone numbers. Still, the Korean-language adoption documents kept by South Korean agencies often have more background information than translated files sent to Western adoptive parents. When they don't get results, adoptees can request another search after a year.

When they fail to locate birth parents, NCRC may recommend that adoptees register their DNA with South Korean police or diplomatic offices, or help them publish their stories in South Korean media.

Take a DNA test

Frustrated with search failures and unreliable records, many Korean adoptees in recent years have attempted to reconnect with their birth families through DNA. Adoptees can register their DNA with a South Korean embassy or consulate in the country where they live. They can also register their DNA with a local police station if they travel to South Korea.

DNA testing isn't common in South Korea, and the process usually depends on whether the birth family had also been trying to find the adoptee through DNA. Once collected at diplomatic or police offices, adoptees' genetic information is cross-checked with South Korea's national DNA database for missing persons. When there is a match, the NCRC takes steps to arrange a reunion.

Some adoptees have also found birth relatives through commercial DNA tests popular in the West. The nonprofit group 325 Kamra helps South Korean adoptees and birth families reunite through DNA, by allowing adoptees to upload their commercial test results to a database or providing test kits.

Join adoptee and volunteer groups

There are various Facebook groups — some open, others closed for adoptees only — where adoptees

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talk about their lives and interactions with adoption agencies.

One of the most active pages is run by Banet, a volunteer group named after the Korean word for newborn baby clothing. The group helps adoptees search for birth families, connects them with government and police, and provides translation during meetings with Korean relatives.

Some websites are tailored to adoptees sharing the same agency, such as Paperslip, which helps adoptees placed through Korea Social Service with birth family searches and adoption document requests.

The Seoul-based nonprofit Global Overseas Adoptees' Link assists adoptees with birth family searches as well as language education, social events and obtaining visas for employment in South Korea. KoRoot, another Seoul-based civic group, also helps adoptees searching for their families and backgrounds and runs advocacy programs.

A year later, Israeli survivors reflect on the lingering toll of Oct. 7

By LEO CORREA and MELANIE LIDMAN Associated Press

Lilach Almog walks past the remains of a police station seized by Hamas militants and buildings pockmarked by bullets in her southern Israeli town multiple times a day.

"Every corner has become a memorial," she said. "Even if you want to forget for a bit, you can't. You look outside at the wall and it reminds you of everything all over again."

Almog joined the roughly 120,000 Israelis displaced by the Israel-Hamas war but has returned home to constant reminders of the Oct. 7, 2023, attack.

A year later, survivors reflect on that day that changed everything. They hid in bedrooms, bomb shelters, safe rooms and beneath trees as Hamas militants poured across the border. In the aftermath, they've mourned loved ones, struggled with anxiety, suffered survivor's guilt and questioned whether they will ever return home to places that still bear the scars of their ordeal.

Lilach Almog, 37, Sderot

The force of a blast at the police station across from her apartment building knocked Almog off her feet on Oct. 7.

She had scrambled to her home's fortified room after air raid sirens sounded in Sderot and watched from the window in disbelief as dozens of gunmen walked down her street with rocket-propelled grenades on their shoulders.

They seized the police station, and a dayslong battle raged before the Israeli military bulldozed the building with militants still inside. More than 30 civilians and police officers were killed in the area around the station.

Almog fled Sderot with her children and mother, living in a hotel in Tel Aviv for eight months, but government assistance ran out in August, forcing her to return to Sderot and memories of that day, when Hamas-led militants killed some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and took about 250 hostage.

The resulting war has killed more than 41,000 Palestinians, according to the Gaza Health Ministry, which does not differentiate between fighters and civilians but says more than half were women and children.

The anxiety of the past year has overwhelmed her, forcing her to leave her work as an architect and interior designer and go on disability leave. Her 9-year-old son began wetting the bed. Her 11-year-old daughter refuses to go anywhere without her.

"As long as the war is still continuing, there's no way to feel calm, to return to our lives," she said. "We still have the hostages there. We still have nightmares. There's no end."

Ziv Abud, 27, Nova music festival survivor and girlfriend of hostage Eliya Cohen

When Ziv Abud spotted the bomb shelter on the side of the road as she was trying to escape the attack on the Nova music festival, she breathed a sigh of relief, thinking it would be a safe place to wait out the rockets.

"We know now that the shelter we went into was basically going into a death trap," she said.

Nearly 30 people had crammed into the concrete shelter meant to hold about 10. When Hamas militants arrived, they started tossing grenades inside.

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A former soldier was able to toss out eight grenades, but the ninth exploded inside the shelter, instantly killing about half the people, Abud said. In the smoke and chaos, militants grabbed people to take as hostages and sprayed the shelter with bullets.

Abud survived, protected by the crush of bodies above her. When she opened her eyes, she saw the bodies of her nephew and his girlfriend but no trace of her boyfriend, Eliya Cohen. Four people, including Israeli-American Hersh Goldberg-Polin, were kidnapped, and six others survived.

Over the past year, Abud has campaigned tirelessly for the hostages and flown around the world to press for Cohen's return.

"I think less about my own trauma, just how to bring Elijah home," she said.

Shlomo Margalit, 86, and Hanna'le Margalit, 79, Kibbutz Nir Oz

Shlomo and Hanna'le Margalit still struggle to comprehend how they survived.

All of the residents on both sides of their home in Kibbutz Nir Oz were killed or kidnapped on Oct. 7. Hamas militants entered their home three times but did not go into the safe room where they were hiding.

Of Nir Oz's nearly 400 residents, 42 were killed and 75 were kidnapped that day. But the couple, part of the founding generation on the kibbutz, was spared.

The Margalits have been married for 64 years and lived in Nir Oz nearly all that time, working to transform the barren desert into a village filled with towering trees and green lawns. The kibbutz was devastated by the attack and will take years to rebuild, though questions remain about how — or even if — it should be.

Like most of the residents of Nir Oz, the couple is living in temporary housing, a development of new apartment buildings about an hour northeast.

"I still can't think about what was lost. I think for me that will happen much later," Hanna'le Margalit said. "Right now, all the energy and our work is for survival, to get used to a new place, to hope the hostages will come home."

Shlomo Margalit returns to the kibbutz about once a week to care for the cemetery, a job he held before Oct. 7. But now many graves have been added. Each time he is there, he chooses one person and goes to their ruined house to properly bid them farewell.

"It's too many to do all at once," he said. "It's too sad and too hard. It's impossible."

Eilat Shalev, 47, Nova festival survivor

Eilat Shalev remembers that the pomelos — large citrus fruits — were about to be harvested a few days after Oct. 7 in southern Israel.

She knows that because farmers had already set out large collection bins, which she hid behind as Hamas militants overran the road leading to the Nova music festival, where she had been dancing with her husband, Shai.

The two got separated as militants began shooting at their car. Shalev ran toward nearby fields, jumping in and out of vehicles, until she found herself near a pomelo orchard.

"I grabbed the first tree I saw on the left side. I hid with my hands on my head and my face in the earth, just praying to God that God will rescue me so I will live and return to my kids," she said.

Minutes later, a bullet hit just centimeters from her head. She played dead for hours before making her way back to the road. Eventually, Israeli security forces brought her to a police station. As the hours passed and her husband didn't make contact, she grew increasingly worried. He was pronounced dead five days later.

Shalev said she and her four children, ages 12 to 23, have turned to Judaism for comfort. But she has trouble sleeping at night and struggles to run her household alone.

"As the days go by, one day and another day and another day, it's actually getting worse. It doesn't get better," Shalev said. "Missing him gets stronger because you understand more and more that he's not coming back. He's really not coming back."

Liat Atzili, 50, hostage from Kibbutz Nir Oz

After 54 days in captivity in Gaza, Liat Atzili was determined to return to her work as a high school history and civics teacher to wrest back control of her identity.

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"I feel most comfortable and most at ease, and it's the thing that comes the most naturally for me to be in a classroom," she said. "It's a real connection to what I used to be like and what my life was before."

She counts herself lucky to have been held in an apartment in conditions much better than the hostages kept in underground tunnels. Still, during her captivity, Atzili had no idea whether her family had survived.

The day after her release as part of a November cease-fire deal, the Israeli military announced that her husband, Aviv, had been killed and his body was being held in Gaza. Two of her three children were on the kibbutz, and both survived.

The upcoming anniversary is more difficult than Atzili anticipated, a milestone for how much she has lost over the past year. On Oct. 7, she plans for at least part of the day to stay in bed and watch "Dirty Dancing."

Next month, Atzili hopes to return to one of her passions, giving tours at Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust Museum. She understands the parallels people want to draw between the Holocaust and what happened to her, but the reality in the Middle East is different, she said.

"The Israeli Jews sort of wish that the Palestinians disappeared, and the Palestinians sort of wish that the Jews disappeared, but that's not going to happen," she said. "Nobody's going anywhere. We don't have to love each other, but we have to get along, and we have to find a way that everybody can live here in safety."

As search for Helene's victims drags into second week, sheriff says rescuers 'will not rest'

By JEFF AMY Associated Press

PENSACOLA, N.C. (AP) — The search for victims of Hurricane Helene dragged into its second week on Friday, as exhausted rescue crews and volunteers continued to work long days — navigating past washed out roads, downed power lines and mudslides — to reach the isolated and the missing.

"We know these are hard times, but please know we're coming," Sheriff Quentin Miller of Buncombe County, North Carolina, said at a Thursday evening press briefing. "We're coming to get you. We're coming to pick up our people."

With at least 215 killed, Helene is already the deadliest hurricane to hit the mainland U.S. since Katrina in 2005, and dozens or possibly hundreds of people are still unaccounted for. Roughly half the victims were in North Carolina, while dozens more were killed in South Carolina and Georgia.

In Buncombe County alone, 72 people had been confirmed dead as of Thursday evening, Miller said. Buncombe includes the tourist hub of Asheville, the region's most populous city. Still, the sheriff holds out hope that many of the missing are alive.

His message to them?

"Your safety and well-being are our highest priority. And we will not rest until you are secure and that you are being cared for."

Rescuers face difficult terrain

Now more than a week since the storm roared onto Florida's Gulf Coast, lack of phone service and electricity continues to hinder efforts to contact the missing. That means search crews must trudge through the mountains to learn whether residents are safe.

Along the Cane River in western North Carolina's Blue Ridge Mountains, the Pensacola Volunteer Fire Department had to cut their way through trees at the top of a valley on Thursday, nearly a week after a wall of water swept through.

Pensacola, which sits a few miles from Mount Mitchell, the highest point east of the Mississippi River, lost an untold number of people, said Mark Harrison, chief medical officer for the department.

"We're starting to do recovery," he said. "We've got the most critical people out."

Near the Tennessee state line, crews were finally starting to reach side roads after clearing the main roads, but that brought a new set of challenges. The smaller roads wind through switchbacks and cross

small bridges that can be tricky to navigate even in the best weather.

"Everything is fine and then they come around a bend and the road is gone and it's one big gully or the bridge is gone," said Charlie Wallin, a Watauga County commissioner. "We can only get so far."

Every day there are new requests to check on someone who hasn't been heard from yet, Wallin said. When the search will end is hard to tell.

"You hope you're getting closer, but it's still hard to know," he said.

Power slowly coming back

Electricity is being slowly restored, and the number of homes and businesses without power dipped below 1 million on Thursday for the first time since last weekend, according to poweroutage.us. Most of the outages are in the Carolinas and Georgia, where Helene struck after coming into Florida on Sept. 26 as a Category 4 hurricane.

President Joe Biden flew over the devastation in North and South Carolina on Wednesday. The administration announced a federal commitment to foot the bill for debris removal and emergency protective measures for six months in North Carolina and three months in Georgia. The money will address the impacts of landslides and flooding and cover costs of first responders, search and rescue teams, shelters and mass feeding.

Filing in Trump case details remarkable schism with Pence over rejecting 2020 election loss

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — Days before rioters roamed the halls of the U.S. Capitol threatening to "hang Mike Pence," Donald Trump told his vice president that people are going to "hate your guts" and "think you're stupid" if he failed to stop the 2020 election certification.

The New Year's Day warning wasn't the first time Trump pressured Pence to overturn the election results. Nor was it the last. In what came to be known as "Operation Pence Card," Trump spent weeks publicly and privately pushing his vice president to help him stay in power after losing.

"You're too honest," Trump berated his vice president in that Jan. 1 morning call.

After they hung up, the president tweeted a reminder for his followers to come to Washington for the "BIG Protest Rally" just days away — what would become the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection at the Capitol.

The exchanges between the president and his vice president, detailed in special counsel Jack Smith's court filing this week, show the extraordinary lengths Trump went to overturn the 2020 election, even as he lays the groundwork to challenge this year's contest, if he loses.

Pence is no longer standing beside Trump, and has refused to endorse the Republican nominee's bid to return to the White House. Trump and his new vice presidential running-mate, JD Vance, still refuse to accept the 2020 election results that delivered the presidency to Joe Biden.

At a pivotal moment during this week's debate between Vance and Democratic vice presidential nominee Tim Walz, Vance declined to say whether he accepted the results of the last election. In a stark retort, Walz said, "That's why Mike Pence isn't on this stage."

Much of the special counsel's filing recounts the tumultuous months after the November election, when Trump — surrounded by allies including Steve Bannon, his former campaign manager turned podcast host, who is now in jail after a contempt of Congress conviction — directed his team to fight to keep him in office. The former president, indicted on criminal charges in the conspiracy to overturn the 2020 election, called the new filing "election interference" and has sought to have the case dismissed.

The day after the election, Trump told Pence to "study up" on the claims of voter fraud in the states they had previously won, when they first ran for office together in 2016.

"It was just look at all of it, let me know what you think," Pence recalled of their Nov. 4 phone call. "But he told me the campaign was going to fight, was going to go to court and make challenges."

That weekend, as Biden was projected the winner, Pence tried to "encourage" Trump "as a friend" to consider all that he had accomplished.

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"You took a dying party and gave it a new lease on life," Pence told Trump on Nov. 7.

As the days went on, the campaign team was giving Trump what Pence described as a "sober and somewhat pessimistic report" on the state of the election challenges they were waging.

"Pence gradually and gently tried to convince the defendant to accept the lawful results of the election, even if it meant they lost," the court filing said.

"Don't concede but recognize the process is over," Pence said he told his defeated running mate on Nov. 12.

Four days later at a private lunch, Pence encouraged the president to accept the results and run again in four years. "I don't know, 2024 is so far off," Trump responded, according to the filing.

By early December there was a shift. Trump was starting to think about Congress' role in the election process.

"For the first time, he mentioned to Pence the possibility of challenging the election results in the House of Representatives," the filing said, citing a Dec. 5 phone call.

It was the beginning of an intensifying public and private campaign, orchestrated by Trump, that in the coming weeks would bear down on Pence, and ultimately raise concern for his own safety. Some of the details are described in Pence's own book, "So Help Me God."

Trump and his team of outside lawyers, headed by Rudy Giuliani, "developed a new plan" after their legal challenges all failed. It was focused on seven states Trump had lost, guided by a proposal from law professor John Eastman to create alternate slates of electors who would claim the defeated president, in fact, had won.

And they turned their attention to Pence.

They falsely claimed that Pence, in his ministerial role as president of the Senate, could decide on Jan. 6 which slates of electors to select, or send them both back to the states for reconsideration, the prosecutors said.

"They lied to Pence, telling him there was substantial campaign fraud and concealing their orchestration of the plan," the prosecutor wrote. "And they lied to the public, falsely claiming that Pence had the authority during the certification proceeding to reject electoral votes."

Members of Trump's campaign staff called the plan "crazy" and referred derogatorily to those organizing it as characters from the "Star Wars bar."

Trump told Pence of his plans for a Jan. 6 rally and expressed the thought it would be a "big day," the filing said.

As they had lunch together a couple days later, on Dec. 21, Pence again encouraged Trump not to look at the election as a loss but "just an intermission."

Pence told the president that if they still came up short, "after we have exhausted every legal process in the courts and Congress," then Trump should "take a bow."

But Trump would not relent. On Dec. 23, Trump retweeted "Operation Pence Card," and began to "directly and repeatedly pressure Pence," prosecutors said, and continued "summoning" his supporters to amass in Washington.

On Christmas Day, when Pence called the president to wish him Merry Christmas, Trump told him he had the discretion over certification while presiding in Congress.

"You know I don't think I have the authority to change the outcome," Pence said.

As Jan. 6 approached, the days were becoming more desperate for Trump. The president tore into his vice president during the New Year's morning phone call. The next day he asked the Georgia secretary of state to "find 11,780 votes" that could prove he won the election in that state. He later told Pence a senator would be seeking a 10-day delay in certification during the proceedings. "You can make the decision," Trump told Pence.

Pence took five pages of contemporaneous notes during a meeting at the White House when Trump directed his team to outline the plan for Pence and said, "When there's fraud the rules change."

Pence told them, "I'm not seeing this argument working."

"The conspirators were undeterred," the prosecutor wrote, and Trump continued to publicly pressure

Pence.

"I hope Mike Pence comes through for us," Trump said at a rally in Georgia.

Meeting privately in the Oval Office on Jan. 5, the defeated president told his vice president once more, "I think you have the power to decertify."

When Pence was unmoved, Trump threatened to criticize him publicly: "I'm going to have to say you did a great disservice."

This concerned Pence, the prosecutor wrote, and the vice president's Secret Service detail was alerted.

Trump called Pence later that evening, with his lawyers, to again raise the issue of sending the electors back to the states. Trump called Pence again late that night: "You gotta be tough tomorrow."

The next morning, Jan. 6, before Trump took the rally stage, he made one more call to Pence.

When Pence again refused the request, the prosecutor wrote, Trump was incensed.

Trump reinserted remarks targeting Pence into his speech. And Trump sent a crowd of angry supporters to the Capitol.

Harris and Trump battle for labor support as dockworkers suspend strike

By CHRIS MEGERIAN Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — Vice President Kamala Harris will visit the union stronghold of Flint on Friday as she battles with Donald Trump for working-class voters who could tip the scales in this year's election.

Her appearance in the battleground state of Michigan comes the day after U.S. dockworkers suspended their strike in hopes of reaching a new contract, sparing the country a damaging episode of labor unrest that could have rattled the economy. A tentative agreement was reached to raise salaries, although other issues still need to be resolved.

Harris issued a statement saying the development "indicates progress toward a strong contract and represents the power of collective bargaining." She added that "dockworkers deserve a fair share for their hard work getting essential goods out to communities across America."

Unions have long been a bedrock of support for Democrats, but Harris has failed to secure some key endorsements. The International Association of Fire Fighters announced this week that it wouldn't back a candidate this year, following a similar announcement from the Teamsters. Both unions endorsed Joe Biden four years ago.

It's not a total cold shoulder for Harris. Some Teamsters locals are supporting her, and she won quick endorsements from national teachers unions, the building trades, the AFL-CIO and the United Auto Workers after replacing Biden at the top of the Democratic ticket.

But the divide within the labor community is a reminder of shifting loyalties in American politics. Democrats have increased their support among white-collar professionals while Republicans try to make inroads among voters who didn't attend college.

During a rally in Michigan on Thursday, Trump claimed that Republicans are now "the party of the American worker," glossing over his anti-union record as president. In a reference to labor unrest at the country's ports, he insisted that "under my leadership Americans won't have to go on strike for a better wage or a better life."

Trump is heading to Georgia on Friday to appear with Gov. Brian Kemp, the latest sign that he's patched up his rocky relationship with the top Republican in a key battleground state. Later in the day, he's holding a campaign event in Fayetteville, North Carolina.

Union voters have traditionally leaned toward Democrats, with 56% supporting Biden in 2020. But Trump has pushed hard to win over blue-collar workers traditionally represented by some of the biggest unions. He won 62% of white voters without college degrees — though only 24% of non-white voters without college degrees — in 2020.

It's frustrating for Democrats, who point to the White House's firm support for unions. Biden even joined a UAW picket line last year.

Lisa Anderson, 59, drove more than an hour from Green Bay in her green "AFSCME for Harris-Walz" shirt

to hear the vice president speak Thursday in Wisconsin.

She's been an elementary school administrative assistant for 17 years, and she's confident that Harris' union support runs deep.

"I'm not worried about it," Anderson said. "If you're voting for Trump, how can you believe in unions?" AFSCME is the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees.

Labor relations could have been a dominant issue in the closing weeks of the presidential campaign if the dockworkers strike continued, leading to snarled ports and shortages on store shelves.

Biden expressed satisfaction that a deal was being worked out.

"We've been working hard on it," he said at the White House. "With the grace of God, and the goodwill of neighbors, it's gonna hold."

Harris campaigns with Liz Cheney at the GOP's birthplace while Trump rallies in Michigan

By CHRIS MEGERIAN and MICHELLE L. PRICE Associated Press

RIPON, Wis. (AP) — Vice President Kamala Harris rallied with Republican Liz Cheney in the birthplace of the modern Republican Party on Thursday as the pair delivered a double-barreled denunciation of GOP nominee Donald Trump as a dire threat to democracy.

With some people hoisting signs "Country over Party," Harris told the crowd that "people of every party must stand together" to reject Trump, citing his refusal to accept the results of the 2020 election and his failure to quell the insurrection of Jan. 6, 2021.

It was an improbable moment — a Democratic nominee giving a nod to a rival party member and to the origins of the opposing party in the closing weeks of a presidential campaign — and it demonstrated how much Harris is attempting to win over moderate and crossover Republican voters.

Harris said of Trump, "He refused to accept the will of the people and to accept the results of an election that was free and fair."

"The president of the United States must not look at our country through the narrow lens of ideology or party partisanship or self-interest," she added. "Our nation is not some spoil to be won. The United States of America is the greatest idea humanity ever devised."

Cheney is one of Trump's most ardent antagonists. She is the daughter of former Republican Vice President Dick Cheney and was the top GOP lawmaker on the House committee that investigated the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection, earning Trump's disdain and effectively exiling herself from her own party.

"Violence does not and must never determine who rules us. Voters do," Cheney told the crowd as she recounted Trump refusing to act as he watched the violent attack on television. Someone in the crowd yelled "coward!" Others booed.

Adding to the surreal nature of the event, the crowd cheered references to Dick Cheney and to another Republican former vice president: Mike Pence, who refused to bow to pressure from Trump and attempt to stop the certification in Congress of Biden's 2020 victory.

"He praised the rioters. He did not condemn them. That's who Donald Trump is," Liz Cheney said, while urging the crowd to "meet this moment. I ask you to stand in truth. To reject the depraved cruelty of Donald Trump."

In an interview Thursday night with Fox News Channel, Trump said of Harris and Cheney: "I think they hurt each other. I think they're so bad, both of them."

Cheney lost her Wyoming seat to a Trump-endorsed candidate two years ago and endorsed Harris, the Democratic nominee, last month. The two women appeared together in Ripon, home to a white schoolhouse where a series of meetings held in 1854 to oppose slavery's expansion led to the start of the Republican Party.

"I know that she loves our country, and I know she will be a president for all Americans," Cheney said of Harris. Noting that she herself remains conservative, Cheney said she was "honored to join her in this urgent cause."

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Harris is on a two-day Wisconsin and Michigan swing, while Trump was in Michigan on Thursday as both candidates grapple for wins in the "blue wall" battleground states, which also include Pennsylvania.

While Cheney and Harris spoke, the former president took his social media site to say Democrats and prosecutors have lied about the "huge crowd of Patriots gathered in Washington, D.C. on January 6th."

That was a far cry from President Joe Biden's reaction. Arriving back at the White House after touring damage from Hurricane Helene in Georgia and Florida, Biden said of Cheney: "She made one of the most consequential speeches I've ever heard. She has character."

"I know her dad," Biden added. "We argue like hell, but I always admired his courage and honesty. What she did not took only political courage, but physical courage."

Harris' visit to Wisconsin came a day after a federal judge unsealed a 165-page court filing outlining prosecutors' case against Trump for his attempt to overturn his 2020 election defeat. Trump has pleaded not guilty to charges of conspiracy and obstruction.

Trump didn't mention the document filed by special counsel Jack Smith or Cheney's appearance with Harris during an 82-minute speech at a rally in Saginaw County, Michigan. In 2020, Biden won the bellwether county by a slim 303 votes, contributing to his victory in the state.

As Trump spoke, his campaign announced he'll appear in Georgia on Friday with Republican Gov. Brian Kemp. The two men have made peace after Trump in August unleashed a blistering attack on Kemp, whom he has faulted for not giving in to his efforts to overturn his loss in 2020.

During the 2020 campaign, Cheney criticized Harris as "a radical liberal" who "wants to recreate America in the image of what's happening on the streets of Portland & Seattle," a reference to unrest that took place in those cities after the murder of George Floyd.

But Jan. 6 was a turning point for Liz Cheney and her family. Both Cheneys are backing Harris, part of a cadre of current and former Republican officials who have broken with the vast majority of their party, which remains in Trump's corner. Harris wants to portray her candidacy as a patriotic choice for independent and conservative voters who were disturbed by Trump's unwillingness to cede power. Trump continues to deny his defeat with false claims of voter fraud.

Harris on Thursday also was endorsed by Cassidy Hutchinson, who was a young White House aide during Trump's presidency and described during a hearing of Cheney's Jan. 6 congressional committee how she grew disgusted by Trump's refusal to stop the rioters that day. Harris' campaign also began airing ads targeting Republicans, independents and former Trump voters in battleground states.

Cheney's presence prompted some dissonance for Harris supporters in the Ripon audience, especially those who remember her father's role as a Republican headliner.

Victor Romero, 46, said it was "a little weird" to be at an event with her.

"I still don't like Liz Cheney's politics," he said. "But I'm glad that she understands the Republican Party that currently exists is just for Trump."

Younger voters, though, reported knowing Cheney primarily for standing up to Trump.

"She stuck to her morals," said Kynaeda Gray, 22.

Mixed verdict for 3 Memphis officers convicted in Tyre Nichols' fatal beating

By ADRIAN SAINZ, KRISTIN M. HALL and JONATHAN MATTISE Associated Press

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP) — Three former Memphis police officers were convicted Thursday in the 2023 fatal beating of Tyre Nichols, but were acquitted of the harshest charges they faced for a death that sparked national protests and calls for broad changes in policing.

Jurors deliberated for about six hours before coming back with the mixed verdict for Tadarrius Bean, Demetrius Haley and Justin Smith.

All were convicted of witness tampering related to the cover-up of the beating, but Bean and Smith were acquitted of civil rights charges. Haley was acquitted of violating Nichols' civil rights causing death, but convicted of the lesser charge of violating his civil rights causing bodily injury. He was also convicted of a

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conspiracy to witness tamper charge that the others were acquitted of.

The court remained silent as the verdicts were read.

The judge ordered all three officers to be taken into custody. He planned to hold a hearing Monday to hear from the defense lawyers about releasing them pending sentencing. The witness tampering charges carry possible sentences of up to 20 years in prison. The civil rights charge against Haley carries up to 10 years in prison. They had faced up to life in prison if convicted on the harshest charges.

The verdict marked a partial setback for prosecutors who were unable to land a conviction for civil rights violations for two officers who played an active role in the encounter. Jurors repeatedly watched graphic clips from police video that showed the officers punch and kick Nichols and hit him with a police baton just steps from his home, as the 29-year-old called out for his mother.

In a statement, Assistant U.S. Attorney General Kristen Clarke, who oversees the Justice Department's civil rights division, said "Tyre Nichols should be alive today."

"We hope this prosecution provides some measure of comfort as the law enforcement officers tied to his death have been held accountable," Clarke said.

Bean and Smith were seen on video wrestling with Nichols and holding his arms, while also hitting him, but the jury was not convinced those actions amounted to civil rights violations. An FBI agent said Smith told him he punched Nichols, but defense lawyers argued Bean and Smith were merely slapping Nichols' hands away as they tried to put handcuffs on him.

Rodney Wells, Nichols' stepfather, told The Associated Press outside the courtroom: "A win is a win. They're all going to jail."

Five officers were charged in Nichols' death, but two pleaded guilty and testified against members of their old crime suppression unit.

Prosecutors argued that Nichols was beaten for running from a traffic stop, saying it was part of a common police practice referred to in officer slang as a "street tax" or "run tax." They said the officers lied — to a supervisor, to medical professionals attending to Nichols and in required written reports — about the extent of the force they used.

"This has been a long journey for our family," RowVaughn Wells, Nichols' mother, told reporters. "I'm actually in shock right now because I still can't believe all the stuff that's going on. But we're happy that they all have been convicted and they have been arrested."

Smith's lawyer declined to comment. Attorneys for Bean and Haley did not respond to requests for comment.

Nichols, who was Black, ran from the traffic stop despite being hit with pepper spray and a Taser. The five officers, who were fired after the beating, also are Black.

Some of the most emotional testimony at trial came from one of the officers, Desmond Mills, who took a plea deal in which prosecutors call for up to 15 years in prison. He testified in tears that he was sorry, that he left Nichols' young son fatherless and that he wishes he stopped the punches. Later, he testified that he went along with a cover-up in hopes that Nichols would survive and the whole thing would "blow over."

Nichols died Jan. 10, 2023, three days after the beating. His son is now 7 years old.

The other officer who reached a deal with prosecutors, Emmitt Martin, testified that Nichols was "helpless" while officers pummeled him, and that afterward the officers understood "they weren't going to tell on me, and I wasn't going to tell on them." Under his plea agreement, prosecutors will suggest a prison sentence of up to 40 years.

Defense attorneys sought to portray Martin as a principal aggressor. Martin testified Nichols was not a threat, yet he acknowledged punching and kicking Nichols in the head.

Mills' lawyer declined to comment. Martin's attorney did not immediately respond to a phone message.

The police video shows the officers milling about and talking as Nichols struggles with his injuries. An autopsy report shows he died from blows to the head. The report describes brain injuries, and cuts and bruises on his head and other areas.

With the federal criminal trial complete, other investigations and court action still aren't settled.

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The five officers also have been charged with second-degree murder in state court, where they pleaded not guilty, although Mills and Martin are expected to change their pleas. A trial date in state court has not been set.

The U.S. Department of Justice is conducting a "patterns and practices" investigation into how Memphis officers use force and conduct arrests, and whether the department in the majority-Black city engages in racially discriminatory policing.

The Justice Department also has a separate review concerning use of force, de-escalation strategies and specialized units within Memphis police.

Pastor Earle Fisher, a Memphis activist who has long called for investigations of the city's police, said he hopes the probes "provide for us the remedies we so rightly deserve."

Additionally, Nichols' mother filed a \$550 million lawsuit against the city and its police chief.

Ben Crump and Anthony Romanucci, lawyers for Nichols' family, said the verdicts "bring a measure of accountability for his senseless and tragic death."

"Our fight for justice for Tyre is far from over," the lawyers said in a joint statement.

Israel extends evacuation warnings in Lebanon, signaling a wider offensive

By FADI TAWIL and JACK JEFFERY Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — The Israeli military on Thursday warned people to evacuate communities in southern Lebanon that are outside a U.N.-declared buffer zone, signaling that it may widen a ground operation launched earlier this week against the Hezbollah militant group.

Meanwhile, Israeli forces said they had struck around 200 Hezbollah targets across Lebanon, including weapons storage facilities and observation posts. Strikes continued overnight when a series of massive blasts rocked Beirut's southern suburbs. It was not immediately clear what was targeted or if there were casualties.

The fighting has driven nearly 1.2 million people from their homes in Lebanon, the country's crisis unit said Thursday.

At least nine Israeli soldiers have been killed in clashes with Hezbollah in southern Lebanon, where Israel announced the start of what it says is a limited ground incursion earlier this week. The fighting comes as the region braces for Israel's response to an Iranian ballistic missile attack.

Strikes kill and wound first responders

The World Health Organization reported that 28 health workers were killed in the past day in Lebanon, and access to medical care is becoming limited as three dozen health facilities closed in the south and five hospitals were either partly or fully evacuated in Beirut.

The Lebanese health minister said Israeli strikes that hit nine hospitals and 45 health care centers violate international law and treaties.

"International laws are clear in protecting these people — I mean, paramedics," Firas Abiad said. "Who gave Israel the right to be the judge and the executioner at the same time?"

The Lebanese Red Cross said an Israeli strike wounded four of its paramedics and killed a Lebanese army soldier as they were evacuating wounded people from the south. It said the convoy near the village of Taybeh, which was accompanied by Lebanese troops, was targeted Thursday despite coordinating its movements with U.N. peacekeepers. There was no immediate comment from the Israeli military.

Another Lebanese soldier was killed by Israeli fire at an army post in the southern town of Bint Jbeil, according to the Lebanese military, which said it returned fire. A Lebanese security official, who spoke on condition of anonymity according to regulations, said the army post was hit by artillery fire.

An Israeli airstrike on an apartment in central Beirut late Wednesday killed nine people, including seven Hezbollah-affiliated civilian first responders. Israel has been pounding areas of the country where the militant group has a strong presence since late September, but has rarely struck in the heart of the capital.

There was no warning before the strike late Wednesday, which hit an apartment not far from the United Nations headquarters, the prime minister's office and parliament.

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Palestinian Health Ministry says 18 killed by Israeli strike in West Bank

The Palestinian Health Ministry said 18 people were killed Thursday in an Israeli strike on the Tulkarem refugee camp in the West Bank. It was the deadliest strike in the occupied territory since the Israel-Hamas war erupted last October.

The Israeli army said the strike killed Hamas' leader in Tulkarem. Hamas condemned the strike but did not confirm if any of its members were killed.

The military said the strike was carried out in coordination with the Shin Bet internal security service, but it gave no details on the target. Tulkarem is a militant stronghold in the northern West Bank. It remained unclear how many people were wounded in the blast.

Violence has flared across the Israeli-occupied territory since the Israeli-Hamas war erupted last October. Tulkarem and other northern Palestinian cities have seen some of the worst violence. Palestinian militant groups are active across the northern West Bank, areas where the Palestinian Authority has a limited foothold.

Fighting escalates in southern Lebanon

The Israeli military said Thursday that its strikes in Lebanon had killed at least 15 Hezbollah fighters.

There was no immediate comment from Hezbollah. But if the claim is true, it would mark the latest in a string of assassinations of top Hezbollah officials in recent weeks, including its longtime leader Hassan Nasrallah.

The Israeli military also said Thursday that it had killed a senior Hezbollah militant, Mohammed Anisi, who was involved in the group's development of precision guided missiles. Anisi was killed in an airstrike targeting the group's intelligence branch in Beirut, the army said.

Hezbollah said its fighters detonated a roadside bomb when Israeli forces entered the Lebanese border village of Maroun el-Ras, killing and wounding soldiers. It was not possible to independently confirm the claims made by either side.

So far, ground clashes between Israeli forces and Hezbollah militants have been confined to a narrow strip along the border.

But hundreds of thousands of people have fled their homes, as Israel has warned people to evacuate from dozens of villages and towns in the south, telling them to relocate to areas that are around 60 kilometers (36 miles) from the border and considerably farther north than the Litani River.

Under U.N. Security Council Resolution 1701, which ended the monthlong 2006 war between Israel and Hezbollah, the militants were to withdraw north of the Litani, and Lebanon's armed forces were to patrol the border region along with U.N. peacekeepers.

Neither Lebanon's army nor the peacekeepers were capable of imposing any agreement on Hezbollah by force, and Israel says it defied the resolution and built extensive military infrastructure in towns and villages near the border. Lebanon has accused Israel of violating other parts of the resolution.

Israel says it is targeting Hezbollah after nearly a year of rocket attacks that began Oct. 8 and displaced some 60,000 Israelis from communities in the north. Israel has carried out retaliatory strikes over the past year that have displaced tens of thousands on the Lebanese side.

In recent weeks, Israeli strikes in Lebanon have killed Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah and several of his top commanders. Hundreds more airstrikes across large parts of Lebanon since mid-September have killed at least 1,276 people, according to Lebanon's Health Ministry. Nearly 2,000 people have been killed and more than 9,000 wounded in Lebanon since the fighting began nearly a year ago.

The vast majority of recent strikes have been in areas where Hezbollah has a strong presence.

Fears of a wider war mount after Iranian missile attack

Iran-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen said they launched two drones at Tel Aviv overnight. The military said it identified two drones off the coast of the bustling metropolitan area, shooting one of them down while the other fell in the Mediterranean Sea.

Hezbollah, Hamas and the Houthis are part of the Iran-led Axis of Resistance, which also includes armed groups in Syria and Iraq. They have launched attacks on Israel in solidarity with the Palestinians, drawing

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retaliation in a cycle that has repeatedly threatened to set off a wider war.

The region once again appears on the brink of such a conflict after Iran's missile attack on Tuesday, which it said was a response to the killing of Nasrallah, an Iranian Revolutionary Guard general who was with him, and Ismail Haniyeh, the political leader of Hamas, who was killed in an explosion in Tehran in July that was widely blamed on Israel.

Israel and the United States have said there will be severe consequences for the barrage, which lightly wounded two people and killed a Palestinian in the occupied West Bank. Military leaders from the two countries have been in regular communication "about what a response to Iran should look like," Pentagon deputy press secretary Sabrina Singh said Thursday.

President Joe Biden said Thursday evening that he thought all-out war could be avoided.

"I think we can avoid it, but there's a lot to do yet," he told reporters as he returned to the White House from a visit to areas battered by a recent hurricane. He added that "we're going to help Israel."

A spokesman for Iran's mission to the UN cautioned against coordinated military action with Israel.

"Should any country render assistance to the aggressor, it shall likewise be deemed an accomplice and a legitimate target," the spokesman said in a statement Thursday.

Israel says it killed senior Hamas leader in Gaza

The escalating violence in Lebanon has opened a second front in the war between Israel and Iran-backed militants that began nearly a year ago with Hamas' surprise Oct. 7 attack from the Gaza Strip into Israel.

The Israeli military said Thursday that it killed a senior Hamas leader in an airstrike in the Gaza Strip around three months ago. It said that a strike on an underground compound in northern Gaza killed Rawhi Mushtaha and two other Hamas commanders.

There was no immediate comment from Hamas. Mushtaha was a close associate of Yahya Sinwar, the top leader of Hamas who helped mastermind the Oct. 7 attack. Sinwar is believed to be alive and in hiding in Gaza.

Dockworkers' union to suspend strike until Jan. 15 to allow time to negotiate new contract

By TOM KRISHER AP Business Writer

DETROIT (AP) — The union representing 45,000 striking U.S. dockworkers at East and Gulf coast ports reached a deal Thursday to suspend a three-day strike until Jan. 15 to provide time to negotiate a new contract.

The union, the International Longshoremen's Association, is to resume working immediately. The temporary end to the strike came after the union and the U.S. Maritime Alliance, which represents ports and shipping companies, reached a tentative agreement on wages, the union and ports said in a joint statement.

A person briefed on the agreement said the ports sweetened their wage offer from about 50% over six years to 62%. The person didn't want to be identified because the agreement is tentative. Any wage increase would have to be approved by union members as part of the ratification of a final contract.

The union went on strike early Tuesday after its contract expired in a dispute over pay and the automation of tasks at 36 ports stretching from Maine to Texas. The strike came at the peak of the holiday shopping season at the ports, which handle about half the cargo from ships coming into and out of the United States.

The walkout raised the risk of shortages of goods on store shelves if it lasted more than a few weeks. Most retailers, though, had stocked up or shipped items early in anticipation of the dockworkers' strike.

"With the grace of God, and the goodwill of neighbors, it's gonna hold," President Joe Biden told reporters Thursday night after the agreement.

In a statement later, Biden applauded both sides "for acting patriotically to reopen our ports and ensure the availability of critical supplies for Hurricane Helene recovery and rebuilding."

Biden said that collective bargaining is "critical to building a stronger economy from the middle out and the bottom up."

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The union's membership won't need to vote on the temporary suspension of the strike, meaning that giant cranes should start loading and unloading shipping containers Thursday night. Until Jan. 15, the workers will be covered under the old contract, which expired on Sept. 30.

The union had been demanding a 77% raise over six years, plus a complete ban on the use of automation at the ports, which members see as a threat to their jobs. Both sides also have been apart on the issues of pension contributions and the distribution of royalties paid on containers that are moved by workers.

Thomas Kohler, who teaches labor and employment law at Boston College, said the agreement to halt the strike means that the two sides are close to a final deal.

"I'm sure that if they weren't going anywhere they wouldn't have suspended (the strike)," he said. "They've got wages. They'll work out the language on automation, and I'm sure that what this really means is it gives the parties time to sit down and get exactly the language they can both live with."

Industry analysts have said that for every day of a port strike it takes four to six days to recover. But they said a short strike of a few days probably wouldn't gum up the supply chain too badly.

Kohler said the surprise end to the strike may catch railroads with cars, engines and crews out of position. But railroads are likely to work quickly to fix that.

Just before the strike had begun, the Maritime Alliance said both sides had moved off their original wage offers, a tentative sign of progress.

The settlement pushes the strike and any potential shortages past the November presidential election, eliminating a potential liability for Vice President Kamala Harris, the Democratic nominee. It's also a big plus for the Biden-Harris administration, which has billed itself as the most union-friendly in American history. Shortages could have driven up prices and reignited inflation.

Thursday's deal came after administration officials met with foreign-owned shipping companies before dawn on Zoom, according to a person briefed on the day's events who asked not to be identified because the talks were private. The White House wanted to increase pressure to settle, emphasizing the responsibility to reopen the ports to help with recovery from Hurricane Helene, the person said.

Acting Labor Secretary Julie Su told them she could get the union to the bargaining table to extend the contract if the carriers made a higher wage offer. Chief of Staff Jeff Zients told the carriers they had to make an offer by the end of the day so a manmade strike wouldn't worsen a natural disaster, the person said.

By midday the Maritime Alliance members agreed to a large increase, bringing about the agreement, according to the person.

Melania Trump says she supports abortion rights, putting her at odds with the GOP

By CHRISTINE FERNANDO Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — Melania Trump revealed her support for abortion rights Thursday ahead of the release of her upcoming memoir, exposing a stark contrast with her husband, Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump, on the crucial election issue.

In a video posted to her X account Thursday morning, the former first lady defended women's "individual freedoms" to do what they want with their bodies — a position at odds with much of the Republican Party and her own husband, who has struggled to find a consistent message on abortion while wedged between anti-abortion supporters within his base and the majority of Americans who support abortion rights.

"Individual freedom is a fundamental principle that I safeguard," Melania Trump said in the video. "Without a doubt, there is no room for compromise when it comes to this essential right that all women possess from birth: individual freedom. What does 'my body, my choice' really mean?"

The video appears to confirm excerpts of her self-titled memoir reported by The Guardian on Wednesday.

Melania Trump has rarely publicly expressed her personal political views and has been largely absent from the campaign trail. But in her memoir, set to be released publicly next Tuesday, she argues that the decision to end a pregnancy should be left to a woman and her doctor, "free from any intervention of pressure from the government," according to the published excerpts.

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"Why should anyone other than the woman herself have the power to determine what she does with her own body?" she wrote, according to The Guardian. "A woman's fundamental right of individual liberty, to her own life, grants her the authority to terminate her pregnancy if she wishes."

Melania Trump writes that she has "carried this belief with me throughout my entire adult life."

These views contrast sharply with the GOP's anti-abortion platform and with Donald Trump, who has repeatedly taken credit for appointing the three Supreme Court justices who helped overturn Roe v. Wade and boasted about returning the abortion question to the states. Democrats have blamed the former president for the severe deterioration of reproductive rights as abortion bans were implemented in large swaths of the country following the overturning of the landmark case, which had granted a constitutional right to abortion.

Donald Trump said Thursday that he had talked to his wife about the book and told her to "go with your heart."

"We spoke about it. And I said, you have to write what you believe. I'm not going to tell you what to do. You have to write what you believe," he told Fox News, adding, "There are some people that are very, very far right on the issue, meaning without exceptions, and then there are other people that view it a little bit differently than that."

Vice President Kamala Harris' campaign noted Trump's role in ending Roe v. Wade in a statement reacting to Melania Trump's defense of abortion rights.

"Sadly for the women across America, Mrs. Trump's husband firmly disagrees with her and is the reason that more than one in three American women live under a Trump Abortion Ban that threatens their health, their freedom, and their lives," Harris campaign spokesperson Sarafina Chitika said in a statement. "Donald Trump has made it abundantly clear: If he wins in November, he will ban abortion nationwide, punish women, and restrict women's access to reproductive health care."

Donald Trump on Tuesday said he would veto a federal abortion ban, the first time he has explicitly said so after previously refusing to answer questions on the subject. Abortion rights advocates are skeptical, however, saying Trump cannot be trusted not to restrict reproductive rights.

Alexis McGill Johnson, president and CEO of Planned Parenthood Action Fund, said the memoir is another example of "the Trumps playing voters like a fiddle."

"As president, (Trump) made it his mission to get Roe v. Wade overturned," she said in a statement. "Melania stood by him, never once publicly disavowing his actions until weeks before an election where our bodies are again on the ballot and they are losing voters to this issue. Read between the lines."

Democratic strategist Brittany Crampsie called the memoir's release a "clear attempt to appeal to more moderate voters and to moderate JD Vance's very clearly extreme views on the issue." But she was skeptical that the move would work in favor of Trump, saying his shifting views "have already confused voters and sowed distrust."

Melania Trump also defends abortions later in pregnancy, asserting that "most abortions conducted during the later stages of pregnancy were the result of severe fetal abnormalities that probably would have led to the death or stillbirth of the child. Perhaps even the death of the mother."

"These cases were extremely rare and typically occurred after several consultations between the woman and her doctor," she writes.

These views appear diametrically opposed to her husband, who has often parroted misinformation about abortions later in pregnancy, falsely claiming that Democrats support abortion "after birth," though infanticide is outlawed in every state.

The national abortion group SBA Pro-Life America denounced the former first lady's views on abortion, including her comments on abortion later in pregnancy, but said their "priority is to defeat Kamala Harris."

"Women with unplanned pregnancies are crying out for more resources, not more abortions," the organization's president Marjorie Dannenfelser said in a statement. "We must have compassion for them and for babies in the womb who suffer from brutal abortions."

Mary Ruth Ziegler, a law professor at the University of California, Davis School of Law who focuses on

reproductive rights law and history, said it is unclear if the memoir's release so close to the election was an attempt to help Donald Trump. But she did note that Melania Trump's split from Trump on the issue is not uncommon historically.

There is "a pretty deep history of first ladies being more supportive of abortion rights than their husbands," including Betty Ford, a vocal abortion rights supporter and the wife of former President Gerald Ford, Ziegler said.

Donald Trump promoted his wife's book at a September rally in New York, calling on supporters to "go out and get her book." It is unclear if the former president has read the book.

"Go out and buy it," he told the crowd. "It's great. And if she says bad things about me, I'll call you all up, and I'll say, 'Don't buy it.'"

Soul-searching and regret over unheeded warnings follow Helene's destruction

By JIM MUSTIAN, BERNARD CONDON and ERIK VERDUZCO Associated Press

ASHEVILLE, N.C. (AP) — Before Hurricane Helene's landfall last week, the National Weather Service began an all-out blitz to alert emergency planners, first responders and residents across the Southeast that the storm's heavy rains and high winds could bring disaster hundreds of miles from the coast.

Warnings blared phrases such as "URGENT," "life threatening" and "catastrophic" describing the impending perils as far inland as the mountains of North Carolina and Tennessee. Smartphones buzzed with repeated push alerts of flash floods and dangerous winds. States of emergency were declared from Florida to Virginia. And the weather service reached back to 1916 for a precedent, correctly predicting Helene would rank among the "most significant weather events" the Asheville, North Carolina, area had ever seen.

But the red flags and cataclysmic forecasts weren't enough to prevent the still-rising death toll. The number has soared to at least 215 across six states. At least 72 of those were in hard-hit Asheville and surrounding Buncombe County from flash floods, mudslides, falling trees, crumbled roads and other calamities.

"Despite the dire, dire predictions, the impacts were probably even worse than we expected," said Steve Wilkinson, the meteorologist in charge of the National Weather Service's regional office in Greenville-Spartanburg, South Carolina.

"We reserve this strong language for only the worst situations," he said. "But it's hard to go out and tell people this is going to totally change the landscape of western North Carolina."

As the region begins its long road to recovery, a task complicated by cut-off communities, a lack of running water and still-spotty cellphone service, the growing number of casualties has prompted soul-searching among devastated homeowners and officials alike. They wonder whether more could have been done to sound the alarms and respond in a mountainous region that's not often in the path of hurricanes.

"It sounds stupid to say this, but I didn't realize it would be like bombs going off," Brenton Murrell said after surveying his Asheville neighborhood strewn with mud and debris, military Osprey aircraft whirring overhead. "It's like a war zone."

Like many residents interviewed by The Associated Press, Murrell had never experienced the effects of a hurricane and felt detached from the danger despite receiving numerous warnings of "extreme risk of loss of life and property."

Murrell said those words never really scared him, in part because his neighbors had been talking for days about the last big flood two decades ago and offered mostly reassuring words that "if you're not in a low-lying area, you'll be fine."

"There was some sort of disconnect," said Murrell, who now regrets riding out the storm at home with his wife, two children and dog, even though they are all safe. "It's human nature to not truly comprehend something until you've felt it yourself."

Many residents said they had not grasped the magnitude of the storm until it was too late. For some, evacuating became impossible as fallen trees and surging floodwaters made roads and bridges impassable. The cascade of emergencies caught seemingly everyone off guard.

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Sara Lavery, of Canton, said she received multiple alerts last Thursday before the worst of the storm had hit and was alarmed at how quickly "flood watches" on her phone progressed to "flood warnings." Then she looked out at the Pigeon River near her home and got really scared.

"We saw a tree the size of telephone pole, a kitchen sink, a bedroom dresser," she said. "It was terrifying."

Still, she and her fiance decided to stay, partly because their home was on high ground, partly to leave the roads empty for others and help out endangered residents in lower areas.

"Some people don't have a place to go, some don't have a four-wheel vehicle to get out," Lavery said. "People always say, 'Why didn't you evacuate?' Not everyone can."

"We never thought this would happen," she said. "Western North Carolina is the mountains."

As the storm swept through, Mia Taylor, of nearby Hendersonville, said she received alerts on her phone about the threat of floods "but some of us were kind of just like, 'Oh, it's not that serious.'"

She tried to drive to a nearby town to shelter with her children but found "every which way was blocked off." She ended up turning around only for her car to shut off in the storm.

"You didn't think that it was going to be this bad," she said.

Lillian Govus, a Buncombe County spokesperson, said that has been a familiar refrain since the storm because no one alive in the area had seen anything approaching Helene's destruction. She described the storm's pre-dawn arrival last Friday as "insidious," noting some residents were in bed and may not have heard the emergency alerts.

"Folks were trying to evacuate, but there was nowhere to go," she said. "If there's a landslide, it doesn't matter how high you go."

Wilkinson, the meteorologist, said forecasters knew many days before the storm that Helene would be catastrophic for western North Carolina and began notifying the emergency management community in briefings and presentations, focusing primarily on flooding and secondarily on wind. Surrounding mountain towns like Asheville, a city of some 95,000, were of particular concern because the communities were built in valleys.

An AP analysis of social media postings and cellphone alerts found more than a dozen were sent by Buncombe County and the National Weather Service on Wednesday and Thursday alone. And the language used to convey the threat from Helene — "extremely rare event," "prepare for a life-threatening storm," "Act Now!" — became increasingly dire as authorities urged people to seek higher ground and evacuate in some cases. The most alarming ones said the destruction could be the worst in a century, referencing the "Great Flood of 1916" in which 80 people were killed.

In one of its repeated postings on the social platform X, Wilkinson's staff pleaded with residents to take its warnings "very seriously" and have multiple means of receiving alerts.

"We made an attempt based on previous events, to hit our warnings well ahead of time," Wilkinson told the AP, "so the alerts went out before the high wind hit. They kind of kept coming."

The weather service's rainfall and wind speed predictions largely held up, Wilkinson said, with some areas receiving more than 1 foot (0.3 meters) of rain. Mount Mitchell State Park recorded wind gusts at 106 mph (171 kph). The French Broad River Basin saw rivers topping their highest-ever crests by several feet, the weather service reported, adding Helene brought "likely the most severe flooding in recorded history across Buncombe County."

"The last time a storm like this hit was in the Book of Genesis when Noah had to build an ark," said Zeb Smathers, the mayor of Canton, North Carolina.

Wilkinson said it might be impossible to know the number of people who didn't heed the warnings or didn't get them. Cellphone service is sometimes spotty in the mountainous region and may have gotten worse as the storm rolled in.

"I honestly believe we did everything we could have done," he said. "It's sad that we couldn't do more, but we're trying to recognize that what we did made some difference."

In the aftermath of the storm, Wilkinson's office posted an emotional letter on X thanking first responders and calling Helene "the worst event in our office's history."

"As meteorologists we always want to get the forecast right," it said. "This is one we wanted to get wrong."

Los Angeles prosecutors to review new evidence in Menendez brothers' 1996 murder conviction

By CHRISTOPHER WEBER and JAIMIE DING Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Prosecutors in Los Angeles are reviewing new evidence in the case of Erik and Lyle Menendez to determine whether they should be serving life sentences for killing their parents in their Beverly Hills mansion more than 35 years ago, the city's district attorney said Thursday.

Los Angeles County District Attorney George Gascón said during a news conference that there is no question Erik Menendez, 53, and his 56-year-old brother, Lyle Menendez, committed the murders, but his office will be reviewing new evidence and will make a decision on whether a resentencing is warranted in the notorious case that captured national attention.

The new evidence presented in a petition includes a letter written by Erik Menendez that his attorneys say corroborates the allegations that he was sexually abused by his father.

The brothers have said they killed their parents out of self-defense after enduring a lifetime of physical, emotional and sexual abuse from them. Their attorneys argue that because of society's changing views on sexual abuse, that the brothers may not have been convicted of first-degree murder and sentenced to life without parole today.

Bryan Freedman, the extended family's lawyers, said they strongly support the brothers' release.

"She wishes nothing more than for them to be released," Freedman said of Joan VanderMolen, the brothers' aunt.

The brothers' attorneys said the family believed from the beginning they should have been charged with manslaughter rather than murder. Manslaughter was not an option for the jury during the second trial that ultimately led to the brothers' murder conviction, attorney Mark Geragos said.

Lyle Menendez, who was then 21, and Erik Menendez, then 18, admitted they fatally shot-gunned their entertainment executive father Jose Menendez and their mother, Kitty Menendez, in 1989 but said they feared their parents were about to kill them to prevent the disclosure of the father's long-term sexual molestation of Erik.

Prosecutors at the time contended there was no evidence of any molestation. They said the sons were after their parents' multimillion-dollar estate.

Jurors rejected a death sentence in favor of life without parole.

Attorney Cliff Gardner, who also represents the brothers, said they are pleased by the district attorney's decision. The attorneys have asked for the court to vacate their conviction.

"Given today's very different understanding of how sexual and physical abuse impacts children — both boys and girls — and the remarkable new evidence, we think resentencing is the appropriate result," Gardner said in an email Thursday to The Associated Press. "The brothers have served more than 30 years in prison. That is enough."

The case has gained new attention in recent weeks after Netflix began streaming the true-crime drama "Monsters: The Lyle and Erik Menendez Story."

In a statement on X posted by his wife, Erik Menendez called the show a "dishonest portrayal" of what happened that has taken them back to a time when prosecutors "built a narrative on a belief system that males were not sexually abused, and that males experience rape trauma differently from women."

Gascón said he believes that the topic of sexual assault would have been treated with more sensitivity if the case had happened today.

"We have not decided on an outcome. We are reviewing information," Gascón said.

He said his office did not know the "validity" of what was presented at the trial.

Gascón, who is seeking reelection, noted that more than 300 people have been resentenced during his term, and only four have gone on to commit a crime again.

A hearing was scheduled for Nov. 29.

Lyle Menendez recently earned a sociology degree from the University of California, Irvine, through a prison program. Geragos said they have been model prisoners despite believing they would never be

released.

"I think it's time," Geragos said. "The family thinks it's time."

Reality TV star and celebrity personality Kim Kardashian, who has advocated for criminal justice reform, also weighed in, writing in a personal essay shared with NBC News that the outsized media attention on the first trial that was nationally televised denied them justice.

She noted with "their suffering and stories of abuse ridiculed in skits on 'Saturday Night Live'" that they were painted as "two arrogant, rich kids from Beverly Hills who killed their parents out of greed. There was no room for empathy, let alone sympathy."

"Erik and Lyle had no chance of a fair trial against this backdrop," Kardashian wrote.

US arranges flights to bring Americans out of Lebanon as others seek escape

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER, MATTHEW LEE and JOEY CAPPELLETTI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S.-arranged flights have brought about 250 Americans and their relatives out of Lebanon this week during escalated fighting between Israel and Hezbollah, while thousands of others still there face airstrikes and diminishing commercial flights.

In Washington, senior State Department and White House officials met Thursday with two top Arab American officials to discuss U.S. efforts to help American citizens leave Lebanon. The two leaders also separately met with officials from the Department of Homeland Security.

Michigan state Rep. Alabas Farhat and Abed Ayoub, executive director of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, used the White House meeting to "really drive home a lot of important points about the issues our community members are facing on the ground and a lot of the logistical problems that they're encountering with it when it comes to this evacuation," Ayoub said.

Some officials and community leaders in Michigan, home to the nation's largest concentration of Arab Americans, are calling on the U.S. to start an evacuation. Pentagon spokeswoman Sabrina Singh said that was not being considered right now.

"The U.S. military is, of course, on the ready and has a whole wide range of plans. Should we need to evacuate American citizens out of Lebanon, we absolutely can," Singh told reporters. She added, "We haven't been called to do that."

Israel has stepped up airstrikes and launched a ground incursion into southern Lebanon targeting Iranian-backed Hezbollah militant leaders. Iran on Tuesday fired nearly 200 ballistic missiles toward Israel, stoking fears that the escalating attacks, including an Israeli response, will explode into an all-out regional war.

Israel and Hezbollah have traded fire across the Lebanon border almost daily since the day after Hamas, another Iranian-backed militant group, attacked Israel on Oct. 7, triggering the war in Gaza.

Other countries, from Greece to the United Kingdom, Japan and Colombia, have arranged flights or sent military planes to ferry out their citizens.

A U.S. family was mourning Kamel Ahmad Jawad, a resident of metro Detroit's Dearborn area, who was killed in southern Lebanon on Tuesday after they say he stayed to help civilians too old, infirm or poor to flee.

He had been on the phone with his daughter Tuesday when the impact of a strike knocked him off his feet, his daughter, Nadine Kamel Jawad, said in a statement.

"He simply got up, found his phone, and told me he needed to finish praying in case another strike hit him," she said.

The State Department has been telling Americans for almost a year not to travel to Lebanon and advising Americans to leave the country on commercial flights for months. It also has made clear that government-run evacuations are rare, while offering emergency loans to aid travel out of Lebanon.

Some Americans said their relatives who are U.S. citizens or green-card holders have been struggling for days or weeks to get seats on flights out of Lebanon. They say limits on withdrawing money from banks due to Lebanon's longstanding economic collapse and intermittent electricity and internet have made it

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difficult.

Rebecca Abou-Chedid, a lawyer based in Washington, said she paid \$5,000 to get a female relative on the last seat of a flight out of Beirut on Saturday.

"She was on her way to the airport" when Israeli began one of its first days of intensified bombing, Abou-Chedid said Thursday.

Jenna Shami, a Lebanese American in Dearborn, Michigan, described American citizens and green-card holders in her family struggling to contact the U.S. Embassy after airstrikes forced some from their lodgings in Lebanon.

The family had tried for weeks to get seats on commercial flights out, facing increasing ticket prices and cancellations, she said.

The U.S. Embassy offered loans for charter flights, but Americans on their own could find no planes to hire, she said.

Shami and another family, of a Lebanese American military veteran from Texas, said their loved ones had just gotten tickets for upcoming flights and that they were hopeful.

State Department spokesman Matthew Miller said the U.S. would continue to organize flights as long the security situation in Lebanon is dire and there is demand.

Miller said Lebanon's flag carrier, Middle East Airlines, also had set aside about 1,400 seats on flights for Americans over the past week. Several hundred had taken them, he said.

Miller could not speak to the cost of the airline's flights, over which the U.S. government has no regulatory oversight, but said the maximum fare that would be charged for a U.S.-organized contract flight would be \$283 per person.

More than 6,000 American citizens have contacted the U.S. Embassy in Beirut seeking information about departing the country over the past week.

Not all of those have actually sought assistance in leaving, and Miller said the department understood that some Americans, many of them dual U.S.-Lebanese nationals and longtime residents of the country, may choose to stay.

Miller said the embassy is prepared to offer temporary loans to Americans who choose to remain in Lebanon but want to relocate to a potentially safer area of the country. The embassy also would provide emergency loans to Americans who wish to leave on the U.S.-contracted flights.

The US could have seen shortages and higher retail prices if a dockworkers strike had dragged on

By MAE ANDERSON and ANNE D'INNOCENZIO AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — U.S. ports from Maine to Texas shut down this week when the union representing about 45,000 dockworkers went on strike for the first time since 1977.

Workers began walking picket lines early Tuesday near ports all along the East and Gulf coasts.

A shutdown lasting more than a few weeks would have had the potential to raise prices and create shortages of goods throughout the country as the holiday shopping season — along with a tight presidential election — approaches.

But the union representing the striking U.S. dockworkers, the International Longshoremen's Association, reached a deal Thursday to suspend the strike until Jan. 15 to provide time to negotiate a new contract. The union's members will resume working immediately at least until January.

What are the issues in the dockworkers strike?

The union is demanding significantly higher wages and a total ban on the automation of cranes, gates and container-moving trucks that are used in the loading or unloading of freight at 36 U.S. ports. Those ports handle roughly half of the nation's cargo from ships.

The contract between the ILA and the United States Maritime Alliance, which represents the ports, expired Tuesday.

The union's opening demand was a 77% pay raise over the six-year life of the contract, with Daggett

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saying that it would make up for inflation and years of small raises. ILA members make a base salary of about \$81,000 per year, but some can pull in over \$200,000 annually with large amounts of overtime.

On Monday, before workers hit the picket lines, the alliance said it had increased its offer to 50% raises over six years, and it pledged to keep limits on automation in place from the old contract. The alliance also said its offer tripled employer contributions to retirement plans and strengthened health care options.

Which ports were affected?

While any port can handle any type of goods, some ports are specialized to handle goods for a particular industry. The ports affected by the shutdown included Baltimore and Brunswick, Georgia, the top two busiest auto ports; Philadelphia, which gives priority to fruits and vegetables; and New Orleans, which handles coffee, mainly from South America and Southeast Asia, various chemicals from Mexico and North Europe, and wood products from Asia and South America.

Other major ports affected include Boston; New York/New Jersey; Norfolk, Virginia; Wilmington, North Carolina; Charleston, South Carolina; Savannah, Georgia; Tampa, Florida; Mobile, Alabama; and Houston.

Can the government intervene?

If a strike were deemed a danger to U.S. economic health, President Joe Biden could have, under the 1947 Taft-Hartley Act, sought a court order for an 80-day cooling-off period. That would have suspended the strike.

But during an exchange with reporters on Sunday, Biden said "no" when asked if he planned to intervene. "Because it's collective bargaining, I don't believe in Taft-Hartley," Biden said.

How are states responding?

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis said he would order the Florida National Guard and the Florida State Guard to the state's ports to "maintain order" and possibly help resume operations as residents and business recover from Hurricane Helene.

"This has the potential of really disrupting the hurricane recovery and of hurting the people who were victims of the storm," DeSantis said at a Thursday news conference. He spoke before news emerged that the union had agreed to suspend its walkout.

Maryland Gov. Wes Moore, Massachusetts Gov. Maura Healey, New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy and New York Gov. Kathy Hochul put out a joint statement saying they were monitoring the situation for incidences of price gouging.

How will this affect consumers?

With the strike being suspended, consumers probably wouldn't notice any significant shortages or price hikes. Had the stoppage persisted for more than a month, it would have been a different story, depending on what you're shopping for. Most holiday retail goods have already arrived from overseas, so there is a buffer. Prices on everything from fruits and vegetables to cars may have headed higher, at least temporarily, if it had dragged on.

That would have been unwelcome news after snarled supply chains sent prices jetting higher at the end of the pandemic, and could have been potentially damaging politically with Election Day about a month away.

The 'sell-by' clock never stops ticking

Container loads of highly perishable bananas had been stuck at some ports.

Before the suspension was announced, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack noted that limiting the duration of the strike was the key to preventing shortages and higher prices.

Businesses had made contingency plans

Since the major supply chain disruption in 2021, retailers have adapted to supply chain disrupters being the new norm, said Rick Haase, owner of a mini-chain of Patina gift shops in and around the Twin Cities in Minnesota.

"The best approach for Patina has been to secure orders early and have the goods in our warehouse and back rooms to ensure we are in stock on key goods," Haase said.

Still, housing those goods for longer can have an inflationary impact at the register because retailers will need to recoup those storage costs, or absorb them.

Jay Foreman, CEO of Basic Fun, a Boca Raton, Florida, the maker of Care Bears and Lincoln Logs, has

already shifted all of the toy company's container shipments away from the East Coast to West Coast ports, primarily Los Angeles and Long Beach. That too, comes with a cost.

The maneuver added anywhere from 10% to 20% in extra costs that his company will have to absorb because Basic Fun's prices for the next 10 months are locked in with retailers. But Foreman would consider raising prices during the second half of 2025 if the strike is prolonged.

Daniel Vasquez, who owns the import, export specialty company Dynamic Auto Movers in Miami, increased inventory, specifically for vehicles that take longer to ship, in anticipation of a strike.

He too stopped relying on one port or shipping partner and has expanded his relationship with smaller ports and shipping companies that can bypass congested areas.

The search for the missing hits snags at every corner as Helene's death toll tops 200

By JEFF AMY and JOHN SEEWER Associated Press

PENSACOLA, N.C. (AP) — Rescue crews and volunteers facing obstacles at every turn in North Carolina's remote mountains paddled canoes across swollen rivers and steered horses past mudslides in the rush to reach those stranded or missing by Hurricane Helene's rampage that killed more than 200 throughout the Southeast.

Now a week since the storm first roared onto Florida's Gulf Coast, the search continued for people who have yet to be heard from in places where phone service and electricity were knocked out. Pleas for help came from people running low on medicine or in need of fuel for their generators.

How many people are missing or unaccounted for isn't clear. The death toll soared to 215 people on Thursday as more victims were found, making Helene the deadliest hurricane to hit the mainland U.S. since Katrina in 2005. Roughly half the victims were in North Carolina, while dozens more were killed in South Carolina and Georgia.

Each road presents a new challenge for rescuers

Along the Cane River in western North Carolina's Blue Ridge Mountains, rescuers from the Pensacola Volunteer Fire Department were cutting their way through trees at the top of a valley nearly a week after a wall of chocolate-milk colored water swept through for hours.

Pensacola, which sits a few miles from Mount Mitchell, the highest point east of the Mississippi River, lost an untold number of people, said Mark Harrison, chief medical officer for the department.

"We're starting to do recovery," he said Thursday. "We've got the most critical people out."

Harrison was helping dispatch volunteers driving all-terrain vehicles on supply runs to people still on ridgetops. Many don't want to leave their houses, while others lost their vehicles and need help getting to town.

Bradley Billheimer, who hiked down to the fire station to access the internet, said he just talked to his mom for the first time since the storm. He feared his house will be without power for months.

"I think we're going to walk out in a couple of days," he said.

In another county that sits alongside the Tennessee state line, crews were just finishing clearing main routes and reaching side roads that wind through switchbacks and cross small bridges that can be tricky to navigate even in the best weather. Each road presented a new challenge.

"Everything is fine and then they come around a bend and the road is gone and it's one big gully or the bridge is gone," said Charlie Wallin, a commissioner in Watauga County. "We can only get so far."

Most people the crews come across turn out to be fine and just in need of water, but every day there are new requests to check on someone who hasn't been heard from yet, Wallin said. When the search will end is hard to tell, he said.

"You hope you're getting closer, but it's still hard to know," he said.

A week into the search and rescue operations in Buncombe County, which includes the hard-hit tourist city of Asheville and where more than 72 have been killed, the county doesn't have an official tally of

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people who are unaccounted for or missing.

The county sheriff said his office believes more than 200 people are missing, although other officials said the number is constantly changing when crews make contact with people who hadn't been accounted for or receive new names of people who may be missing.

"We're continuing to find people. We know we have pockets of people who are isolated due to landslides and bridges out," said Avril Pinder, the county manager. "So they are disconnected but not missing."

Frank Johnson, who owns a company that makes robotic cutting machines in Mars Hill, North Carolina, said he feels like he is running a relief mission on his own. He's using his own workers, volunteers and supplies and know-how from his company to get water, food, fuel and other supplies to his neighbors.

"I've been hearing there are entire neighborhoods gone. I'm still not sure people have the whole grasp of what we're dealing with," Johnson said.

Electricity is being slowly restored, as the number of homes and businesses without power dipped below 1 million for the first time since last weekend, according to poweroutage.us. Most of the outages are in the Carolinas and Georgia, where Helene struck after coming into Florida on Sept. 26 as a Category 4 hurricane.

Heartbreaking deaths across the Southeast

John Savage said his grandparents were found hugging one another in their Beech Island, South Carolina, home where one of the biggest trees on the property crashed on top of their bedroom and killed them.

The family thinks it was God's plan to take them together, rather than one suffer without the other, he said.

"When they pulled them out of there, my grandpa apparently heard the tree snap beforehand and rolled over to try and protect my grandmother," Savage said.

Two firefighters killed when a tree fell on their truck also were among at least 40 people killed across South Carolina.

Month-old twin boys, born in mid-August, were the youngest known victims. Khyzier and Khazmir Williams died alongside their 27-year-old mother Kobe Williams when a large tree fell through the roof of their home Monday in Thomson, Georgia.

Kobe's father, Obie Lee Williams, said he's devastated that he will never have the chance to meet his grandsons in person. He described his daughter as a lovable, social and strong young woman who cared deeply about her family.

Other young victims of the storm include a 7-year-old girl and a 4-year-old boy from Washington County, Georgia.

Biden back in the disaster zone

President Joe Biden spoke with survivors and first responders and surveyed damage Thursday in Keaton Beach, Florida, walking past mountains of splintered wood, demolished homes and massive pieces of siding crumpled like paper. Biden met with people who had lost homes; one couple was living out of a trailer near the wreckage of their home, their personal belongings strewn on the ground.

Later at a badly damaged pecan farm outside Valdosta, Georgia, he said the victims of Helene had gone through "hell."

"I want you to know I see you ... I grieve with you," Biden said while also thanking emergency workers and saying it was a moment to "put politics aside."

Biden flew over the devastation in North and South Carolina on Wednesday. The administration announced a federal commitment to foot the bill for debris removal and emergency protective measures for six months in North Carolina and three months in Georgia. The money will address the impacts of landslides and flooding and cover costs of first responders, search and rescue teams, shelters, and mass feeding.

A crash saved a teenager whose car suddenly sped up to 120 mph in the rural Midwest

By JIM SALTER Associated Press

Sam Dutcher had just finished running errands when the 18-year-old's Honda Pilot suddenly began to accelerate, even though his foot wasn't on the gas pedal. The brake wouldn't work, he couldn't shift into neutral, and before long, the runaway SUV was speeding into the western Minnesota countryside with no way to stop.

"I had the brake to the floor," Dutcher said Thursday, but the SUV kept going faster and faster, eventually reaching 120 mph (193 kpm).

A last-ditch plan averted disaster that September evening — a trooper sped in front of the Honda and Dutcher was told to crash into the rear of his squad car, allowing it to ease safely to a stop moments before reaching a dangerous intersection.

"That was really all I could think of that was going to get him stopped in time," Minnesota Trooper Zach Gruver said. "We kind of just ran out of time and distance. I really didn't know of any other way."

Dutcher, who graduated high school in May and is studying auto mechanics, was driving to the family home near West Fargo, North Dakota, around 7:30 p.m. on Sept. 17 when he realized something was wrong.

"I went to take my foot off the accelerator," Dutcher recalled. "It wouldn't slow down." As the SUV gained speed, Dutcher had two options: Stay on a two-lane road and drive into Minnesota, or hop onto the interstate. Figuring traffic would be lighter, he chose the road less traveled.

Dutcher tried using voice command on his phone to call 911, but it didn't work. So he called his mom.

Catherine Dutcher was in the drive-thru line at Hardee's. In her 911 call, she mentioned that the Honda had just been in the shop because the accelerator was apparently getting stuck. Authorities suspect that the SUV's computer malfunctioned.

The family should take the vehicle in to a dealership for an inspection, a Honda spokeswoman told The Associated Press. The company could not comment further until an inspection was done, she said.

As the Honda sped into Minnesota, Clay County Deputy Zach Johnson reached Dutcher by phone. Dash camera video shows Johnson talking Dutcher through possible solutions. Nothing worked.

Meanwhile, all Catherine Dutcher could do was worry. When she called 911 for an update, she broke.

"They said they've got several officers going to him as well as medical," she recalled. "At that point I kind of lost it because I just imagined him being either seriously injured or dead. I didn't know how they were going to stop a car that was going that speed."

Gruver heard what was going on through his radio. His Dodge Charger eventually caught up with the Honda as it was approaching the town of Hitterdal, Minnesota, about 30 miles (48 kilometers) from where the problem began.

Only about 200 people live in Hitterdal, but the highway runs through an area with a couple of stop signs, a railroad crossing and an intersection with another highway.

Gruver raced ahead to keep traffic at bay. His dashcam video showed the Honda zipping quickly past him through town. Dutcher said the SUV was going about 120 mph (193 kph).

Soon, another worry: Johnson warned Gruver that the highway ended at a T-intersection about four miles (6.4 kilometers) away — a two-minute drive at racing speed.

Law enforcement came up with a plan on the fly: Dutcher should drive into the back of Gruver's squad car as both vehicles were moving.

"Yes, run into the back of his car," Johnson urged Dutcher in a conversation captured on dashcam video.

The 2022 Honda's crash mitigation system kicked in at the point of impact, helping ease the collision, Gruver said. The Honda was going about 50 mph (80 kph) when it struck the trooper's vehicle. From there, Gruver was able to gradually slow to a stop.

Gruver, a married 30-year-old expecting his first baby, was impressed by the young driver who was able to navigate a runaway vehicle at unimaginable speeds.

"Sam did great," said Gruver, who has been a trooper for over three years. "I don't think there's a whole lot of people that could deal with that pressure."

Trump and the federal election case against him: Key passages from prosecutors' latest court filing

By ALANNA DURKIN RICHER and FARNOUSH AMIRI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Donald Trump “laid the groundwork for his crimes” well before Election Day in 2020. He said “the details don’t matter” when told his election fraud claims would fail in court. And his response to learning that then-Vice President Mike Pence was taken to a secure location as rioters stormed the Capitol?

“So what?”

That’s according to a 165-page court filing from special counsel Jack Smith’s team that paints a portrait of a president so desperate to cling to power that he “resorted to crimes” after losing the 2020 election to Democrat Joe Biden.

The filing unsealed Wednesday provides a glimpse into the evidence and testimony prosecutors plan to present if the case accusing Trump of an illegal scheme to overturn the 2020 election ever reaches trial.

The Republican presidential nominee has maintained that he did nothing illegal and has characterized the case as an attempt to hurt his bid to reclaim the White House in November. Trump’s lawyers who have pushed to dismiss the case will now get a chance to respond in court to prosecutors’ claims.

Here are some of the key passages from the filing:

Trump laid the groundwork for his scheme early, prosecutors say

Prosecutors allege Trump started laying the foundation for his illegal scheme well before election day, refusing to say in the months leading up to it whether he would accept the results and suggesting he could only lose if there was fraud.

Three days before the election, a Trump political adviser told a group of supporters that the then-president was “going to declare himself the winner” no matter the outcome,” according to prosecutors.

“That doesn’t mean he’s the winner, he’s just going to say he’s the winner,” the adviser said.

Trump “did exactly that” immediately following the election, prosecutors said. Then, in the days following the election, Trump’s allies “sought to create chaos” at polling places where votes were still being counted, Smith’s team alleges.

When a campaign employee was told about a batch of votes in Detroit that appeared to be heavily in favor of President Joe Biden, the employee told a colleague to “find a reason” that wasn’t right and “give me options to file litigation.”

When the colleague suggested there would be unrest, the campaign employee responded: “Make them riot” and “Do it!!!” according to the filing.

‘The details don’t matter,’ Trump told an adviser

Prosecutors are trying to show that Trump knew his election fraud claims were bogus because many in his circle told him that there was no fraud and that he actually lost the election. Prosecutors say Trump disregarded those assurances just like he disregarded “dozens of court decisions that unanimously rejected his and his allies’ legal claims.”

In one key moment detailed in the filing, prosecutors say a lawyer who represented Trump during his first impeachment trial told Trump that his election fraud claims wouldn’t survive in court. Trump responded: “The details don’t matter,” according to prosecutors.

Prosecutors say they will introduce evidence that shows Trump and his allies “made up figures from whole cloth” about election fraud, detailing how they repeatedly changed their baseless claims on the numbers of noncitizens voting in Arizona.

Details of Trump’s relentless pressure on Pence

One of the most illuminating sections of the filing details the relentless pressure campaign that Trump and his allies enlisted against Pence, beginning well before Election Day and running up to the final minutes of the Jan. 6, 2021, certification of President Joe Biden’s win.

Even as most of the details of the former president’s futile attempts to get his running mate to reject Biden’s electoral votes have been well documented, Smith’s latest brief gives an even more granular look

at the breakdown between the two men as prosecutors say one sought desperately to cling on to power and the other fought to maintain his unwavering fidelity to the Constitution.

When news organizations, including The Associated Press, called the election for Biden on Nov. 7, Pence saw it as an opportunity to "encourage" Trump "as a friend," reminding him that he "took a dying political party and gave it a new lease on life," prosecutors wrote. A few days later, when Trump and his allies were still strategizing ways to overcome the defeat, Pence again reiterated that the next presidential election in 2024 was "not so far off."

When Pence refused on Dec. 28 to support the various legal cases being pursued by Trump and his close allies in Congress, the filing states that Trump told his vice president that "hundreds of thousands" of people "are gonna hate your guts" and "people are gonna think you're stupid." He added, "You're too honest."

This went on for days, until the two men met in person one last time before Jan. 6. The meeting in the Oval Office on the eve of the certification is seen by prosecutors as one of Trump's last efforts to encourage Pence privately to keep him in power, telling him once again that he had "the power to decertify," the results. "When Pence was unmoved, the defendant threatened to criticize him publicly," the filing states. "I'm gonna have to say you did a great disservice," Trump said. Pence relayed this comment to a member of his team who saw it as a direct threat "to the point that he alerted Pence's Secret Service detail.

'So what?' Trump said when told Pence was rushed to safety

As Trump's supporters began attacking the Capitol on Jan. 6 to stop the counting of the electoral votes, an aide rushed in to tell Trump that Pence had been taken to a secure location. The aide was hoping Trump would "take action to ensure Pence's safety," prosecutors wrote. Instead, Trump's only response was, "So what?" prosecutors allege.

Prosecutors say they will present "forensic evidence" from Trump's cellphone and testimony from witnesses to show how Trump spent the afternoon of Jan. 6 on Twitter and watching TV coverage of the riot while his aides pressed him to make a public statement to quell the violence.

"Instead, the defendant refused repeatedly until his advisors gave up and left him alone in the dining room," prosecutors wrote.

Alone in the dining room, Trump then sent a Tweet attacking Pence for not having the "courage to do what should have been done to protect our Country and our Constitution, giving States a chance to certify a corrected set of facts, not the fraudulent or inaccurate ones which they were asked to previously certify."

A rioter with a bullhorn read Trump's Tweet about Pence to the crowd that was trying to enter the Capitol, prosecutors said. It was only after advisers again urged Trump to do something about the riot that he sent a Tweet encouraging his supporters to support law enforcement and "stay peaceful," prosecutors wrote.

Twin babies who died alongside their mother in Georgia are youngest-known Hurricane Helene victims

By HANNAH SCHOENBAUM Associated Press

Obie Williams could hear babies crying and branches battering the windows when he answered his daughter's daily phone call last week as Hurricane Helene tore through her rural Georgia town.

Kobe Williams, 27, and her newborn twin boys were hunkering down at their trailer home in Thomson, Georgia, and starting to fear for their safety. She promised her father she would heed his advice to shelter in the bathroom with her month-old babies until the storm passed.

Minutes later, she was no longer answering her family's calls.

One of her brothers dodged fallen trees and downed power lines to check on her later that day, and he could barely bear to tell his father what he saw.

A large tree had crashed through the roof, crushing Kobe and causing her to fall on top of infant sons Khyzier and Khazmir. All three were found dead.

"I'd seen pictures when they were born and pictures every day since, but I hadn't made it out there yet to meet them," Obie Williams told The Associated Press days after the storm ravaged eastern Georgia. "Now I'll never get to meet my grandsons. It's devastating."

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The babies, born Aug. 20, are the youngest known victims of a storm that had claimed 200 lives across Florida, Georgia, Tennessee, Virginia and the Carolinas as of Thursday. Among the other young victims are a 7-year-old girl and a 4-year-old boy from about 50 miles (80 kilometers) south in Washington County, Georgia.

In the elder Williams' home city of Augusta, 30 miles (48 kilometers) east of his daughter's home in Thomson, power lines stretched along the sidewalks, tree branches blocked the roads and utility poles lay cracked and broken. The debris left him trapped in his neighborhood near the South Carolina border for a little over a day after the storm barreled through.

Kobe, a single mother nursing newborns, had told her family it wasn't possible for her to evacuate with such young babies, her father said.

Many of his 14 other children are still without power in their homes across Georgia. Some have sought refuge in Atlanta, and others have traveled to Augusta to see their father and mourn together.

They are waiting for the bodies to be released by the county coroner and for roads to be cleared before arranging a funeral.

Williams described his daughter as a lovable, social and strong young woman. She always had a smile on her face and loved to make people laugh, he said.

She was studying to be a nursing assistant but had taken time off from school to give birth to her sons. "That was my baby," her father said. "And everybody loved her."

What's next after prosecutors reveal new evidence in Trump's 2020 election interference case

By ALANNA DURKIN RICHER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Special counsel Jack Smith has provided a road map for how prosecutors hope to prove their case charging former President Donald Trump with an illegal scheme to overturn his 2020 election loss — if it ever gets to trial.

In court papers unsealed Wednesday, Smith's team details new evidence of Trump's "increasingly desperate" efforts to cling to power even as those close to him sought to convince him that he had lost the presidency.

It comes just over a month before the presidential election that could determine the future of the case.

The Republican presidential nominee, who has railed against the case as politically motivated, slammed the filing in a NewsNation interview, calling it "pure election interference" and "weaponization of the government."

Here's a look at what the filing means and what's next:

Trump committed 'private crimes,' prosecutors say

The purpose of the filing is to convince U.S. District Judge Tanya Chutkan in Washington that allegations against Trump can move forward to trial even after the Supreme Court in July ruled that former presidents have broad immunity from prosecution.

While the Supreme Court said former presidents have at least presumptive immunity for actions taken in their official role as president, the justices said they are not shielded from prosecution for things they do in their private capacity.

Smith's team is trying to make the case that Trump's prosecution is not off limits because he was acting as a private candidate for office — not a commander in chief — when he schemed to overturn the will of voters. Prosecutors say Trump "must stand trial for his private crimes as would any other citizen."

"Although the defendant was the incumbent President during the charged conspiracies, his scheme was fundamentally a private one," prosecutors wrote.

"Working with a team of private co-conspirators, the defendant acted as a candidate when he pursued multiple criminal means to disrupt, through fraud and deceit, the government function by which votes are collected and counted—a function in which the defendant, as President, had no official role."

How did we get here? The case's long and winding road

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The case was supposed to go to trial in March in Washington's federal court but was put on hold last December so Trump could appeal his sweeping claims of presidential immunity. Trump had asked the Supreme Court to dismiss the case entirely, saying it the "Presidency itself cannot retain its vital independence, if the President faces criminal prosecution for official acts once he leaves office."

While the Supreme Court didn't dismiss the case, it effectively stripped from the indictment allegations involving Trump's dealings with the Justice Department. And it sent the case back to Chutkan to determine which of the remaining allegations in the indictment involve official actions for which Trump may be immune from prosecution and which allegations, if any, can move forward to trial.

In August, Smith's team filed a new indictment that kept the same criminal charges but narrowed the allegations in an attempt to comply with the Supreme Court's ruling.

So what happens now?

Trump's lawyers had objected to the filing, accusing prosecutors of wanting to publicize their "politically motivated manifesto" to hurt Trump's campaign in the final weeks before the election.

The defense will now get a chance to respond to the arguments from Smith's team. Trump's response was due later this month, but Chutkan agreed to give the defense until Nov. 7 after they asked for an extension.

Meanwhile, Trump's lawyers are continuing their efforts to have the case dismissed. The defense on Thursday filed court papers challenging the case on legal grounds, saying prosecutors stretched the laws "beyond their breaking point based on false claims that President Trump is somehow responsible for events at the Capitol."

Trump's lawyers have argued that the allegations in the indictment — including conversations with his vice president and pressing state officials on the administration of elections — cut to the core of Trump's responsibilities as commander in chief. Trump attorney John Lauro told the judge during a hearing last month that the Supreme Court's opinion required the outright dismissal of the case — a position the judge made clear she did not accept.

Even if the judge agrees with prosecutors, the case isn't heading to trial anytime soon. Her rulings are expected to be appealed — likely all the way to the Supreme Court.

And if Trump defeats Vice President Kamala Harris, he could appoint an attorney general who would seek the dismissal of this case and the other federal prosecutions he faces. Or Trump could potentially order a pardon for himself.

New material for Democrats, but the political impact is uncertain

The filing gives Democrats new material to use as they campaign against Trump and offers voters a reminder of the allegations just a month out from Election Day, even as voting has already begun in some states.

Trump, too, has seized on the report, casting it as yet another effort by his rivals to try to hobble his campaign — complaints that have proven a powerful motivator for his base and a boon for his fundraising.

It's unclear, though, what impact it will have on voters, given the wealth of detail about the 2020 campaign that has already been released as well as Trump's multiple indictments. In polling, concerns about protecting democracy have typically lagged behind concerns about issues like the economy and inflation.

That includes a recent CNN poll that found 4 in 10 likely voters said the economy was their most important issue when deciding how to vote, versus about 2 in 10 who said it was protecting democracy.

The issue of protecting democracy appears to be more important for Democrats and voters already backing Harris. Roughly 4 in 10 voters who support Harris say it is their top issue. For Republicans and Trump supporters, about 6 in 10 name the economy as their top voting issue, followed by immigration. Just 5% of Trump supporters said protecting democracy was their top issue.

Hurricane Helene brings climate change to forefront of the presidential campaign

By MATTHEW DALY Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The devastation wrought by Hurricane Helene has brought climate change to the forefront of the presidential campaign after the issue lingered on the margins for months.

Vice President Kamala Harris traveled to Georgia Wednesday to see hard-hit areas, two days after her Republican opponent, former President Donald Trump, was in the state and criticized the federal response to the storm, which has killed at least 200 people in the Southeast. Helene is the deadliest storm to hit the U.S. mainland since Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

President Joe Biden toured some of the hardest-hit areas by helicopter on Wednesday and Thursday. Biden, who has frequently been called on to survey damage and console victims after tornadoes, wildfires, tropical storms and other natural disasters, traveled to the Carolinas, Florida and Georgia to get a closer look at the hurricane devastation.

"Storms are getting stronger and stronger," Biden said Wednesday after surveying damage near Asheville, North Carolina. At least 70 people died in the state.

"Nobody can deny the impact of the climate crisis any more," Biden said at a briefing in Raleigh. "They must be brain dead if they do."

Harris, meanwhile, hugged and huddled with a family Wednesday in hurricane-ravaged Augusta, Georgia.

"There is real pain and trauma that resulted because of this hurricane" and its aftermath, Harris said outside a storm-damaged house with downed trees in the yard.

"We are here for the long haul," she added.

The focus on the storm — and its link to climate change — was notable after climate change was only lightly mentioned in two presidential debates this year. The candidates instead focused on abortion rights, the economy, immigration and other issues.

The hurricane featured prominently in Tuesday's vice presidential debate as Republican JD Vance and Democrat Tim Walz were asked about the storm and the larger issue of climate change.

Both men called the hurricane a tragedy and agreed on the need for a strong federal response. But it was Walz, the governor of Minnesota, who put the storm in the context of a warming climate.

"There's no doubt this thing roared onto the scene faster and stronger than anything we've seen," he said.

Bob Henson, a meteorologist and writer with Yale Climate Connections, said it was no surprise that Helene is pushing both the federal disaster response and human-caused climate change into the campaign conversation.

"Weather disasters are often overlooked as a factor in big elections," he said. "Helene is a sprawling catastrophe, affecting millions of Americans. And it dovetails with several well-established links between hurricanes and climate change, including rapid intensification and intensified downpours."

More than 40 trillion gallons of rain drenched the Southeast in the last week, an amount that if concentrated in North Carolina would cover the state in 3 1/2 feet of water. "That's an astronomical amount of precipitation," said Ed Clark, head of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Water Center in Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

During Tuesday's debate, Walz credited Vance for past statements acknowledging that climate change is a problem. But he noted that Trump has called climate change "a hoax" and joked that rising seas "would make more beachfront property to be able to invest in."

Trump said in a speech Tuesday that "the planet has actually gotten little bit cooler recently," adding: "Climate change covers everything."

In fact, summer 2024 sweltered to Earth's hottest on record, making it likely this year will end up as the warmest humanity has measured, according to the European climate service Copernicus. Global records were shattered just last year as human-caused climate change, with a temporary boost from an El Niño, keeps dialing up temperatures and extreme weather, scientists said.

Vance, an Ohio senator, said he and Trump support clean air, clean water and "want the environment

to be cleaner and safer." However, during Trump's four years in office, he took a series of actions to roll back more than 100 environmental regulations.

Vance sidestepped a question about whether he agrees with Trump's statement that climate change is a hoax. "What the president has said is that if the Democrats — in particular Kamala Harris and her leadership — really believe that climate change is serious, what they would be doing is more manufacturing and more energy production in the United States of America. And that's not what they're doing," he said.

"This idea that carbon (dioxide) emissions drives all of the climate change. Well, let's just say that's true just for the sake of argument. So we're not arguing about weird science. If you believe that, what would you want to do?" Vance asked.

The answer, he said, is to "produce as much energy as possible in the United States of America, because we're the cleanest economy in the entire world."

Vance claimed that policies by Biden and Harris actually help China, because many solar panels, lithium-ion batteries and other materials used in renewable energy and electric vehicles are made in China and imported to the United States.

Walz rebutted that claim, noting that the Inflation Reduction Act, the Democrats' signature climate law approved in 2022, includes the largest-ever investment in domestic clean energy production. The law, for which Harris cast the deciding vote, has created 200,000 jobs across the country, including in Ohio and Minnesota, Walz said. Vance was not in the Senate when the law was approved.

"We are producing more natural gas and more oil (in the United States) than we ever have," Walz said. "We're also producing more clean energy."

The comment echoed a remark by Harris in last month's presidential debate. The Biden-Harris administration has overseen "the largest increase in domestic oil production in history because of an approach that recognizes that we cannot over rely on foreign oil," Harris said then.

While Biden rarely mentions it, domestic fossil fuel production under his administration is at an all-time high. Crude oil production averaged 12.9 million barrels a day last year, eclipsing a previous record set in 2019 under Trump, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration.

Democrats want to continue investments in renewable energy such as wind and solar power — and not just because supporters of the Green New Deal want that, Walz said.

"My farmers know climate change is real. They've seen 500-year droughts, 500-year floods back to back. But what they're doing is adapting," he said.

"The solution for us is to continue to move forward, (accept) that climate change is real" and reduce reliance on fossil fuels, Walz said, adding that the administration is doing exactly that.

"We are seeing us becoming an energy superpower for the future, not just the current" time, he said.

At least 78 people died when a boat with 278 on board capsized in eastern Congo, official says

By RUTH ALONGA, JEAN-YVES KAMALE and MONIKA PRONCZUK Associated Press

GOMA, Congo (AP) — At least 78 people died when an overcrowded boat capsized on Lake Kivu in eastern Congo on Thursday, a local governor said. A frantic search and rescue operation was underway hours later as many remained unaccounted for from the vessel, believed to have had 278 people on board.

Jean-Jacques Purusi, the governor of the South Kivu province, said the death toll was provisional and that the number of fatalities could rise further. He said that according to the information that local authorities had, there were 278 people on board.

The boat set off from the port of Minova, in South Kivu province, earlier in the day and was en route to Goma, in North Kivu province, Purusi said, speaking over the phone.

"We do not yet have (the full picture of) the whole situation but we will have it by tomorrow," he told The Associated Press.

The boat sank while trying to dock just meters (yards) away from the port of Kituku, according to witnesses who said they saw rescue services recover at least 50 bodies from the water.

It was the latest deadly boat accident in the central African country, where overcrowding on vessels is often to blame. Maritime regulations also are often not followed.

Congolese officials have often warned against overloading and vowed to punish those violating safety measures for water transportation. But in remote areas where most passengers come from, many are unable to afford public transport for the few available roads.

"We will establish responsibilities and put in place a sanctions regime but also recommendations to improve navigation on the lake," Purusi told the AP.

He added that a lack of adequate equipment — there were no life jackets on the vessel — likely contributed to the tragedy, as did the overcrowding and negligence. Also, there had been a strong storm in the morning in the area of the lake, he added.

In June, an overloaded boat sank near the capital of Kinshasa and 80 passengers lost their lives. In January, 22 people died on Lake Maï-Ndombe and in April 2023, six were killed and 64 went missing on Lake Kivu.

Witnesses of the Thursday tragedy said the boat was visibly overcrowded.

"I was at the port of Kituku when I saw the boat arriving from Minova, full of passengers," Francine Munyi told the AP. "It started to lose its balance and sank into the lake. Some people threw themselves into the water."

"Many died, and few were saved," she added. "I couldn't help them because I don't know how to swim."

The victims' families and Goma residents gathered at the port of Kituku, accusing authorities of negligence in the face of growing insecurity in the region.

Since the fighting between the armed forces and the M23 rebels made the road between the cities of Goma and Minova impassable, forcing the closure of the passage to trucks transporting food, many traders have resorted to maritime transport on Lake Kivu. It's an alternative considered safer than road traffic, which is threatened by insecurity.

But according to Elia Asumani, a shipping agent who works on this line, the situation has become dangerous:

"We are afraid," he told the AP. "This shipwreck was predictable."

Bienfait Sematumba, 27, said he lost four family members.

"They are all dead. I am alone now," he said, sobbing. "If the authorities had ended the war, this shipwreck would never have happened."

The survivors, about 10 of them, were taken to Kyeshero hospital for treatment. One of them, Neema Chimanga, said she was still in shock.

"We saw the boat start to fill with water halfway," she recounted to the AP. "The door of the boat opened, and we tried to close it. But the water was already coming in, and the boat tilted."

"I threw myself into the water and started swimming," she said. "I don't know how I got out of the water."

How Black leaders in New York are grappling with Eric Adams and representation

By AARON MORRISON and MATT BROWN Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — It wasn't a shock to many Black New Yorkers that Mayor Eric Adams has surrounded himself with African American civil rights leaders, clergy and grassroots activists since his indictment last week on federal bribery charges.

Adams, a Brooklyn native who rose from the city's working class to its highest political office, is seen as more than the city's second Black mayor. To many, he's family.

"Four more years!" chanted a sizeable group of Black clergy leaders that had gathered to pray for the mayor outside City Hall Tuesday evening.

"What I want in your prayer is to continue to lift me up, and this administration, with the strength to move forward," Adams said to the group.

"This is what we fought for and many of you were part of the campaign," the mayor said about when

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he was elected.

But even the closest of families feud. The five-count indictment has prompted loud calls for Adams' resignation from Black New York activists, elected leaders and residents. It's also sparked debates about whether to stand behind a controversial figure who, for many, represents a milestone for Black representation in government.

Adams' actions have precedent in Black political history; a child raised in the community who rose to the highest echelons of leadership, then faced legal troubles for potential improper conduct, and later returned to voters for support.

Nearly two years ago, New York voters elected Black leaders to a historic number of local and statewide offices. Some Black leaders now fear that Adams' indictment may tarnish the broader political representation that was achieved. That has led many to grapple with newfound representation and the potential loss of it, while also holding folks accountable to the communities they represent.

"I think that as we achieve power, we ought to make sure we handle it in a way that protects the people that helped you achieve it," said the Rev. Al Sharpton, president and CEO of the National Action Network. "But we also shouldn't rush and throw everybody under the bus because of accusations."

Sharpton, who has known Adams for more than 35 years and counts him as one of the earliest supporters of his civil rights organization, told The Associated Press on Friday that he has "never known him to do anything criminal."

Federal prosecutors have accused Adams of soliciting and accepting illegal campaign contributions and more than \$100,000 in luxury travel perks from Turkish officials and other foreign nationals seeking to buy his influence.

In exchange, they say he performed official favors that benefited Turkey, including pushing through the opening of a consulate building in Manhattan over the objections of fire safety officials who said it was unsafe to occupy.

The charges against Adams come as federal investigators conduct multiple probes linked to several top officials in his administration, including the brother of his former police commissioner; a consulting firm run by another brother of his schools chancellor and deputy mayor for public safety; and one of his top advisers and closest confidantes, Tim Pearson.

Pearson resigned Monday night, weeks after the police commissioner, Edward Caban, and schools chancellor, David Banks, announced they were stepping down. All have denied wrongdoing.

The U.S. attorney who brought the case against Adams, Damian Williams, is also Black.

Michael Blake, a former New York assemblymember and vice chair of the Democratic National Committee, said that the Adams indictment was "a reflective moment" for Black communities in New York and the Black political class that brought Adams to power.

"This cannot be the standard," Blake said. He said the sentiment among elected officials he'd spoken with "is that this is chaotic and unsustainable" and "embarrassing."

Regardless of the result of the criminal prosecution against Adams, Blake said, "I feel pretty confident that come January 1st, 2026, Eric Adams is not going to be the mayor of New York City."

The former assemblymember is considering a run for New York City mayor.

Whether or not Adams should be encouraged to resign is a matter widely debated among Black leaders. Sharpton said he planned to discuss it soon with other top Black leaders in New York. The reverend has previously convened Adams, New York's attorney general, lieutenant governor, City Council speaker, the Manhattan and Bronx district attorneys, all of whom are Black, to celebrate the historic representation across state and local government.

The meeting was called last December, in part, because of the perception that Democrats had lost power in the midterm election amid an increase in crime. Sharpton said he would not make a decision on whether to call for Adams' resignation without meeting again with that esteemed group.

"We may feel he's innocent, but can't run the city. We may feel he's innocent and can run the city. We may feel he's guilty," Sharpton said. "We need to talk."

But some are not waiting for Sharpton's meeting.

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"I ask the mayor to seriously and honestly consider whether full attention can be given to our deserving New Yorkers who need our government to be sound and stable," said New York City Council Speaker Adrienne E. Adams, who is Black and is of no relation to the mayor.

Last week, she called the charges against the mayor "serious" and said that she was "deeply concerned" about the impact of Adams' legal battle on the city's governance.

She's not alone.

"Each New Yorker deserves a mayor who is dedicated to serving our communities, and who upholds the dignity and integrity this office requires," New York state Sen. Zellnor Myrie said. He called the indictment a "sad day for the city, and especially painful for so many Black New Yorkers who put our hope and faith in this mayor."

Still, there are plenty who are defending the mayor.

"I was a little shocked and didn't understand why all of this was happening, quite frankly, to these heroes of ours. And the response that we got from many Black constituents asked, 'Why is the government coming after Black folks,'" said New York Assemblymember Rodney Bichotte Hermelyn, who represents parts of Brooklyn and serves as the chair of the Brooklyn Democratic Party.

"We all know that an indictment is not a conviction," said Bichotte Hermelyn. She quoted the adage, first spoken by a New York state chief judge, that prosecutors "can indict a ham sandwich."

"Adams represents a big political and empowered working class of Black neighborhoods, which is the foundation of his electorate," Bichotte Hermelyn said. "When he ran in 2021, it was a very grassroots approach where people of color from all over, immigrants, women," and others came together.

In the meantime, Adams said he is listening to residents who want him to resist the calls to resign, even if some of his fellow Black leaders are waffling in their support.

"Eric, stay the course," the mayor said of social media messages and email he has received since his indictment. "Don't be distracted."

The Grammys' voting body is more diverse, with 66% new members. What does it mean for the awards?

By MARIA SHERMAN AP Music Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — For years, the Grammy Awards have been criticized over a lack of diversity — artists of color and women left out of top prizes; rap and contemporary R&B stars ignored — a reflection of the Recording Academy's electorate. An evolving voting body, 66% of whom have joined in the last five years, is working to remedy that.

At last year's awards, women dominated the major categories; every televised competitive Grammy went to at least one woman. It stems from a commitment the Recording Academy made five years ago: In 2019, the Academy announced it would add 2,500 women to its voting body by 2025. Under the Grammys' new membership model, the Recording Academy has surpassed that figure ahead of the deadline: More than 3,000 female voting members have been added, it announced Thursday.

"It's definitely something that we're all very proud of," Harvey Mason jr., academy president and CEO, told The Associated Press. "It tells me that we were severely underrepresented in that area."

Reform at the Record Academy dates back to the creation of a task force focused on inclusion and diversity after a previous CEO, Neil Portnow, made comments belittling women at the height of the #MeToo movement.

Since 2019, approximately 8,700 new members have been added to the voting body. In total, there are now more than 16,000 members and more than 13,000 of them are voting members, up from about 14,000 in 2023 (11,000 of which were voting members). In that time, the academy has increased its number of members who identify as people of color by 63%.

"It's not an all-new voting body," Mason assures. "We're very specific and intentional in who we asked to be a part of our academy by listening and learning from different genres and different groups that felt like they were being overlooked, or they weren't being heard."

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Mason says that in the last five years, the Recording Academy has “requalified 100% of our members, which is a huge step.” There are voters who have let their membership lapse — and those who no longer qualify to be a voting member have been removed.

There have been renewal review processes in the past, but under the current model, becoming a voting member requires proof of a primary career in music, two recommendations from industry peers and 12 credits in a single creative profession, at least five of which must be from the last five years.

Comparisons might be made to the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, which announced in 2016 that it would restrict Oscars voting privileges to active members — ineligible parties included those who haven’t worked in three decades since joining the Academy, unless they themselves are nominated — as a response to #OscarsSoWhite criticisms of its lack of diversity. As a result, some members protested that the new measures unjustly scapegoated older academy members. The film academy has also grown its membership, adding more women and people from underrepresented racial and ethnic communities.

The Recording Academy sought to increase its voting body by reaching out to different, underrepresented communities, says Mason. “Let’s take the time to understand why those people aren’t engaging with us, figure out how we can fix that,” he said. “And once we fixed it, then let’s invite them or ask them if they would like to be a part of our organization. So, it was a multi-step process.”

Since 2019, the Recording Academy has also seen growth in voters across different racial backgrounds: 100% growth in AAPI voters, 90% growth in Black voters and 43% growth in Latino voters.

Still, Mason sees room to grow. Of the current voting membership, 66% are men, 49% are white and 66% are over the age of 40.

“Going forward, we’re going to continue the work. We’re going to continue to grow,” he says.

That might not look like a public commitment to a specific figure, but Mason promises “that our goals will be to be the most relevant, the most reflective, the most accurately representative of the music community that is humanly possible.”

Florida communities hit three times by hurricanes grapple with how and whether to rebuild

By KATE PAYNE and DAVID R. MARTIN Associated Press/Report for America

HORSESHOE BEACH, Fla. (AP) — It was just a month ago that Brooke Hiers left the state-issued emergency trailer where her family had lived since Hurricane Idalia slammed into her Gulf Coast fishing village of Horseshoe Beach in August 2023.

Hiers and her husband Clint were still finishing the electrical work in the home they painstakingly rebuilt themselves, wiping out Clint’s savings to do so. They never will finish that wiring job.

Hurricane Helene blew their newly renovated home off its four foot-high pilings, sending it floating into the neighbor’s yard next door.

“You always think, ‘Oh, there’s no way it can happen again,’” Hiers said. “I don’t know if anybody’s ever experienced this in the history of hurricanes.”

For the third time in 13 months, this windswept stretch of Florida’s Big Bend took a direct hit from a hurricane — a one-two-three punch to a 50-mile (80-kilometer) sliver of the state’s more than 8,400 miles (13,500 kilometers) of coastline, first by Idalia, then Category 1 Hurricane Debby in August 2024 and now Helene.

Hiers, who sits on Horseshoe Beach’s town council, said words like “unbelievable” are beginning to lose their meaning.

“I’ve tried to use them all. Catastrophic. Devastating. Heartbreaking ... none of that explains what happened here,” Hiers said.

The back-to-back hits to Florida’s Big Bend are forcing residents to reckon with the true costs of living in an area under siege by storms that researchers say are becoming stronger because of climate change.

The Hiers, like many others here, can’t afford homeowner’s insurance on their flood-prone houses, even if it was available. Residents who have watched their life savings get washed away multiple times are left

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with few choices — leave the communities where their families have lived for generations, pay tens of thousands of dollars to rebuild their houses on stilts as building codes require, or move into a recreational vehicle they can drive out of harm's way.

That's if they can afford any of those things. The storm left many residents bunking with family or friends, sleeping in their cars, or sheltering in what's left of their collapsing homes.

Janalea England wasn't waiting for outside organizations to get aid to her friends and neighbors, turning her commercial fish market in the river town of Steinhatchee into a pop-up donation distribution center, just like she did after Hurricane Idalia. A row of folding tables was stacked with water, canned food, diapers, soap, clothes and shoes, a steady stream of residents coming and going.

"I've never seen so many people homeless as what I have right now. Not in my community," England said. "They have nowhere to go."

'It's just gone'

The sparsely populated Big Bend is known for its towering pine forests and pristine salt marshes that disappear into the horizon, a remote stretch of largely undeveloped coastline that's mostly dodged the crush of condos, golf courses and souvenir strip malls that has carved up so much of the Sunshine State.

This is a place where teachers, mill workers and housekeepers could still afford to live within walking distance of the Gulf's white sand beaches. Or at least they used to, until a third successive hurricane blew their homes apart.

Helene was so destructive, many residents don't have a home left to clean up, escaping the storm with little more than the clothes on their backs, even losing their shoes to the surging tides.

"People didn't even have a Christmas ornament to pick up or a plate from their kitchen," Hiers said. "It was just gone."

In a place where people are trying to get away from what they see as government interference, England, who organized her own donation site, isn't putting her faith in government agencies and insurance companies.

"FEMA didn't do much," she said. "They lost everything with Idalia and they were told, 'here, you can have a loan.' I mean, where's our tax money going then?"

England's sister, Lorraine Davis, got a letter in the mail just days before Helene hit declaring that her insurance company was dropping her, with no explanation other than her home "fails to meet underwriting".

Living on a fixed income, Davis has no idea how she'll repair the long cracks that opened up in the ceiling of her trailer after the last storm.

"We'll all be on our own," England said. "We're used to it."

'This could be the end of your town'

In the surreal aftermath of this third hurricane, some residents don't have the strength to clean up their homes again, not with other storms still brewing in the Gulf.

With marinas washed away, restaurants collapsed and vacation homes blown apart, many commercial fishermen, servers and housecleaners lost their homes and their jobs on the same day.

Those who worked at the local sawmill and paper mill, two bedrock employers in the area, were laid off in the past year too. Now a convoy of semi-trucks full of hurricane relief supplies have set up camp at the shuttered mill in the city of Perry.

Hud Lilliott was a mill worker for 28 years, before losing his job and now his canal-front home in Dekle Beach, just down the street from the house where he grew up.

Lilliott and his wife Laurie hope to rebuild their house there, but they don't know how they'll pay for it. And they're worried the school in Steinhatchee where Laurie teaches first grade could become another casualty of the storm, as the county watches its tax base float away.

"We've worked our whole lives and we're so close to where they say the 'golden years'," Laurie said. "It's like you can see the light and it all goes dark."

Dave Beamer rebuilt his home in Steinhatchee after it was "totaled" by Hurricane Idalia, only to see it washed into the marsh a year later.

"I don't think I can do that again," Beamer said. "Everybody's changing their mind about how we're going to live here."

A waterlogged clock in a shed nearby shows the moment when time stopped, marking before Helene and after.

Beamer plans to stay in this river town, but put his home on wheels — buying a camper and building a pole barn to park it under.

In Horseshoe Beach, Hiers is waiting for a makeshift town hall to be delivered in the coming days, a double-wide trailer where they'll offer what services they can for as long as they can. She and her husband are staying with their daughter, a 45-minute drive away.

"You feel like this could be the end of things as you knew it. Of your town. Of your community," Hiers said. "We just don't even know how to recover at this point."

Hiers said she and her husband will probably buy an RV and park it where their home once stood. But they won't be moving back to Horseshoe Beach for good until this year's storms are done.

They can't bear to do this again.

In South Korea, deepfake porn wrecks women's lives and deepens gender conflict

By HYUNG-JIN KIM Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — Three years after the 30-year-old South Korean woman received a barrage of online fake images that depicted her nude, she is still being treated for trauma. She struggles to talk with men. Using a mobile phone brings back the nightmare.

"It completely trampled me, even though it wasn't a direct physical attack on my body," she said in a phone interview with The Associated Press. She didn't want her name revealed because of privacy concerns.

Many other South Korean women recently have come forward to share similar stories as South Korea grapples with a deluge of non-consensual, explicit deepfake videos and images that have become much more accessible and easier to create.

It was not until last week that parliament revised a law to make watching or possessing deepfake porn content illegal.

Most suspected perpetrators in South Korea are teenage boys. Observers say the boys target female friends, relatives and acquaintances — also mostly minors — as a prank, out of curiosity or misogyny. The attacks raise serious questions about school programs but also threaten to worsen an already troubled divide between men and women.

Deepfake porn in South Korea gained attention after unconfirmed lists of schools that had victims spread online in August. Many girls and women have hastily removed photos and videos from their Instagram, Facebook and other social media accounts. Thousands of young women have staged protests demanding stronger steps against deepfake porn. Politicians, academics and activists have held forums.

"Teenage (girls) must be feeling uneasy about whether their male classmates are okay. Their mutual trust has been completely shattered," said Shin Kyung-ah, a sociology professor at South Korea's Hallym University.

The school lists have not been formally verified, but officials including President Yoon Suk Yeol have confirmed a surge of explicit deepfake content on social media. Police have launched a seven-month crackdown.

Recent attention to the problem has coincided with France's arrest in August of Pavel Durov, the founder of the messaging app Telegram, over allegations that his platform was used for illicit activities including the distribution of child sexual abuse. South Korea's telecommunications and broadcast watchdog said Monday that Telegram has pledged to enforce a zero-tolerance policy on illegal deepfake content.

Police say they've detained 387 people over alleged deepfake crimes this year, more than 80% of them teenagers. Separately, the Education Ministry says about 800 students have informed authorities about intimate deepfake content involving them this year.

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Experts say the true scale of deepfake porn in the country is far bigger.

The U.S. cybersecurity firm Security Hero called South Korea “the country most targeted by deepfake pornography” last year. In a report, it said South Korean singers and actresses constitute more than half of the people featured in deepfake pornography worldwide.

The prevalence of deepfake porn in South Korea reflects various factors including heavy use of smart phones; an absence of comprehensive sex and human rights education in schools and inadequate social media regulations for minors as well as a “misogynic culture” and social norms that “sexually objectify women,” according to Hong Nam-hee, a research professor at the Institute for Urban Humanities at the University of Seoul.

Victims speak of intense suffering.

In parliament, lawmaker Kim Nam Hee read a letter by an unidentified victim who she said tried to kill herself because she didn’t want to suffer any longer from the explicit deepfake videos someone had made of her. Addressing a forum, former opposition party leader Park Ji-hyun read a letter from another victim who said she fainted and was taken to an emergency room after receiving sexually abusive deepfake images and being told by her perpetrators that they were stalking her.

The 30-year-old woman interviewed by The AP said that her doctoral studies in the United States were disrupted for a year. She is receiving treatment after being diagnosed with panic disorder and post-traumatic stress disorder in 2022.

Police said they’ve detained five men for allegedly producing and spreading fake explicit contents of about 20 women, including her. The victims are all graduates from Seoul National University, the country’s top school. Two of the men, including one who allegedly sent her fake nude images in 2021, attended the same university, but she said has no meaningful memory of them.

The woman said the images she received on Telegram used photos she had posted on the local messaging app Kakao Talk, combined with nude photos of strangers. There were also videos showing men masturbating and messages describing her as a promiscuous woman or prostitute. One photo shows a screen shot of a Telegram chatroom with 42 people where her fake images were posted.

The fake images were very crudely made but the woman felt deeply humiliated and shocked because dozens of people — some of whom she likely knows — were sexually harassing her with those photos.

Building trust with men is stressful, she said, because she worries that “normal-looking people could do such things behind my back.”

Using a smart phone sometimes revives memories of the fake images.

“These days, people spend more time on their mobile phones than talking face to face with others. So we can’t really easily escape the traumatic experience of digital crimes if those happen on our phones,” she said. “I was very sociable and really liked to meet new people, but my personality has totally changed since that incident. That made my life really difficult and I’m sad.”

Critics say authorities haven’t done enough to counter deepfake porn despite an epidemic of online sex crimes in recent years, such as spy cam videos of women in public toilets and other places. In 2020, members of a criminal ring were arrested and convicted of blackmailing dozens of women into filming sexually explicit videos for them to sell.

“The number of male juveniles consuming deepfake porn for fun has increased because authorities have overlooked the voices of women” demanding stronger punishment for digital sex crimes, the monitoring group ReSET said in comments sent to AP.

South Korea has no official records on the extent of deepfake online porn. But ReSET said a recent random search of an online chatroom found more than 4,000 sexually exploitive images, videos and other items.

Reviews of district court rulings showed less than a third of the 87 people indicted by prosecutors for deepfake crimes since 2021 were sent to prison. Nearly 60% avoided jail by receiving suspended terms, fines or not-guilty verdicts, according to lawmaker Kim’s office. Judges tended to lighten sentences when those convicted repented for their crimes or were first time offenders.

The deepfake problem has gained urgency given South Korea’s serious rifts over gender roles, workplace

discrimination facing women, mandatory military service for men and social burdens on men and women.

Kim Chae-won, a 25-year-old office worker, said some of her male friends shunned her after she asked them what they thought about digital sex violence targeting women.

"I feel scared of living as a woman in South Korea," said Kim Haeun, a 17-year-old high school student who recently removed all her photos on Instagram. She said she feels awkward when talking with male friends and tries to distance herself from boys she doesn't know well.

"Most sex crimes target women. And when they happen, I think we are often helpless," she said.

New NATO chief Mark Rutte visits Ukraine in his first trip since taking office

By HANNA ARHIROVA and SAMYA KULLAB Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — New NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte visited Ukraine on Thursday in his first official trip since taking office and pledging the alliance's continued support for Kyiv in its war with Russia.

Rutte met with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in Kyiv as air raid sirens twice went off in the Ukrainian capital.

The new head of NATO vowed when he took office on Tuesday to help shore up Western support for Ukraine, which has been fighting Russia's full-scale invasion since February 2022 and has for most of this year been on the defensive due to a relentless Russian army push in the country's eastern regions.

Rutte expressed confidence that he can work with whomever is elected president of the United States, the alliance's most powerful member, in November. That could be a key moment for Ukraine's effort to ensure continuing Western support.

Zelenskyy said he discussed with Rutte elements of Ukraine's so-called victory plan, ahead of a NATO meeting at the Ramstein Air Base in Germany next week. The gathering draws together defense leaders from the 50-plus partner nations who regularly meet to coordinate weapons aid for the war.

The two also discussed the battlefield situation and the specific needs of Ukrainian military units. Zelenskyy reiterated that Ukraine needs more armaments, including long-range weapons it has long requested.

Asked whether the war in the Middle East will affect the timeline he had envisioned for the victory plan, Zelenskyy noted that the U.S. and Britain say Iran has supplied missiles and drones to Russia for use against Ukraine.

He also appealed for Western countries to scrap restrictions on Ukraine's use of Western-supplied long-range weapons to strike deep inside Russia.

"Of course, we want Ukraine to not be forgotten. But the best way not to forget about Ukraine is to provide the appropriate weapons and the necessary permissions," Zelenskyy said. "And to help shoot down ... the same Iranian missiles or drones, just as they are shot down over Israel, to shoot them down in the same way over Ukraine."

Rutte reiterated the alliance's unwavering support for Ukraine, insisting that "Ukraine is closer to NATO than ever before."

He said recent steps taken by NATO "build a bridge to NATO membership" for Ukraine, including 40 billion euros (\$44 billion) of funding assistance, bilateral security agreements between allies, and the formation of a new NATO command to coordinate assistance and training.

Rutte arrived after a Russian glide bomb struck a five-story apartment block in Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city, injuring at least 12 people, including a 3-year-old girl, local officials said Thursday.

The bomb hit between the third and fourth floors of the building on Wednesday night, igniting a fire, Kharkiv regional Gov. Oleh Syniehubov said. Firefighters searched for survivors through smoke and rubble.

The city of Kharkiv, around 30 kilometers (18 miles) from the Russian border, has been a frequent target of aerial attacks throughout the war against Russia that is now deep into its third year.

Increasingly common in the war, glide bombs have terrorized civilians and bludgeoned the Ukrainian army's front-line defenses. Ukraine has no effective countermeasure for glide bombs, which are launched

from Russian aircraft inside Russia.

They were a key weapon in Russia's capture of the tactically significant town of Vuhledar on Wednesday, as Russian forces wreak destruction on the eastern Donetsk region and force weary Ukrainian troops to withdraw from obliterated towns and villages.

Zelenskyy, at a news conference with Rutte, said it was right for Ukraine to pull its forces out of Vuhledar so that they could live to fight another day. Earlier, he said the latest Kharkiv attack highlighted the urgent need for increased support from Ukraine's Western allies.

Zelensky recently held talks with officials in the U.S. in an effort to ensure further Western military support. Russia has had the battlefield initiative since late last year, when a Ukrainian counteroffensive petered out. Ukraine is grappling with a critical manpower problem on the front line and is straining to hold back Russia's grinding assaults.

Though Russia's battlefield gains have been incremental, its steady forward movement is adding up as the Ukrainians are pushed backward and yield ground.

Both sides have kept up regular cross-border aerial attacks, usually at night.

Ukraine's air force said Thursday that 78 out of 105 Shahed drones launched by Russia overnight were destroyed on Thursday as 15 regions of the country came under attack.

The Russian military, meanwhile, intercepted 113 Ukrainian drones overnight, according to a statement by the Defense Ministry in Moscow. The drones were destroyed over four Russian regions on the border with Ukraine — Belgorod, Bryansk, Kursk and Voronezh, it said.

Typhoon Krathon makes landfall in Taiwan, packing fierce winds and torrential rain

By SIMINA MISTREANU Associated Press

KAOHSIUNG, Taiwan (AP) — Typhoon Krathon made landfall Thursday in Taiwan's major port city of Kaohsiung, bringing torrential rains and fierce winds to the island's south. Trees were brought down by high winds and roads were flooded, prompting the closure of schools and businesses.

Krathon made landfall in the industrial Siaogang district of Kaohsiung around 12:40 p.m., the Central Weather Administration said. It packed maximum sustained winds of 126 kph (78 mph) with gusts of 162 kph (101 mph).

The typhoon was forecast to move slowly north and weaken into a tropical depression by Friday before it reaches the capital, Taipei. It was expected to then head across the Taiwan Strait toward the Chinese coast. Winds were strong in Taipei on Thursday, but there was little rain.

Kaohsiung earlier urged its residents to take cover from potentially disastrous winds and rain, which tore down storefronts and flooded car parks but caused no reported loss of life.

The slow-moving typhoon, which approached Taiwan at a speed of about 4 kph (2.5 mph), doused eastern and southern parts of the island over the past five days, forcing thousands to evacuate from mountainous or low-lying areas. Two days of closures are believed to have taken a significant toll on the island's high-tech economy that relies heavily on foreign trade.

Gusts and heavy rains pelted empty streets in Kaohsiung, while life in Taipei, 350 kilometers (215 miles) to the north, was only slightly disrupted.

Many residents woke up Thursday to mobile phone alerts urging them to take shelter from the potentially dangerous winds. The weather administration posted a Facebook message warning Kaohsiung and Pingtung county residents not to go outside when the eye of the storm passes above their area and the weather calms briefly, because the winds would pick up again afterward.

Weather-related events attributed to Krathon injured at least 123 people around the island, according to Taiwan's fire department. Two people died — one after driving into fallen rocks on the road in the southeastern Taitung county, and the other while trimming tree branches in the city of Hualien. Two others remained missing.

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A fire at a hospital in Pingtung County killed at least nine people early Thursday. The deaths were attributed to smoke and the cause was under investigation. It was not immediately clear whether the blaze was related to the typhoon.

Thousands were evacuated from areas vulnerable to mudslides and landslides. Almost 40,000 troops were on standby to help with rescue efforts.

Mountainous areas in the island's south have received up to 169 centimeters (5.5 feet) of rain over the past five days.

China's weather agency said some eastern and southern parts of Taiwan are set to receive extremely heavy rains of up to 40 centimeters (1.3 feet) over the next 24 hours.

Typhoons rarely hit Taiwan's west coast, affecting instead the mountainous eastern side of the island.

Kaohsiung officials, in urging residents to be vigilant about the weather, recalled the destruction brought by Typhoon Thelma, which in 1977 badly damaged the city and caused 37 deaths.

Earlier in the week, Typhoon Krathon lashed northern Philippine islands, killing four people and displacing at least 5,000, officials said.

Today in History:

October 4, Soviets launch Sputnik, spark the Space Age

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Friday, Oct. 4, the 278th day of 2024. There are 88 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Oct. 4, 1957, the Space Age began as the Soviet Union launched Sputnik 1, the first artificial satellite, into orbit.

Also on this date:

In 1777, Gen. George Washington's troops launched an assault on the British at Germantown, Pennsylvania, resulting in heavy American casualties.

In 1927, sculptor Gutzon Borglum began construction on what is now Mount Rushmore National Memorial.

In 1965, Pope Paul VI became the first pope to visit the Western Hemisphere as he addressed the U.N. General Assembly.

In 1970, rock singer Janis Joplin was found dead in her Hollywood hotel room at age 27.

In 2001, a Russian airliner flying from Israel to Siberia was accidentally downed by a Ukrainian anti-aircraft missile over the Black Sea, killing all 78 people aboard.

In 2002, "American Taliban" John Walker Lindh received a 20-year sentence after a sobbing plea for forgiveness before a federal judge in Alexandria, Virginia. (He was released from prison in May, 2019.)

In 2004, the SpaceShipOne rocket plane broke through Earth's atmosphere to the edge of space for the second time in five days, capturing the \$10 million Ansari X prize aimed at opening the final frontier to tourists.

Today's Birthdays: Baseball Hall of Fame manager Tony La Russa is 80. Actor Susan Sarandon is 78. Actor Armand Assante is 75. Actor Christoph Waltz is 68. Singer Jon Secada is 63. Actor Liev Schreiber is 57. Actor Abraham Benrubi is 55. Actor Alicia Silverstone is 48. Actor Caitríona Balfe is 45. Actor Rachael Leigh Cook is 45. Actor Melissa Benoist is 36. NBA All-Star Derrick Rose is 36. Actor Dakota Johnson is 35.