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**BREAKING NEWS: DEMOCRATS TO FORCE HOUSE VOTE TO EXPEL GEORGE SANTOS**

INSIDE THIS EDITION:

**NC GOP OVERRIDES GOVERNOR'S VETO OF 12-WEEK ABORTION BAN**

By Darryl Coote  
UPI

North Carolina Republicans used their supermajority powers to quash Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper's veto of a 12-week abortion ban Tuesday night, making it the latest state to restrict the medical procedure following last summer's end of Roe vs. Wade.

The override was approved first by Republicans in the Senate with a 30-20 vote and then those in the House by a vote of 72-48. Not a single Democrat cast their name in favor of enacting Senate Bill 20, which reduces the legal limit for an abortion from 20

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**'We pay our bills,' Biden says in anticipation of a debt ceiling breakthrough**

By Darryl Coote  
UPI

President Joe Biden said Wednesday he was optimistic about the prospects of breaking an impasse over the debt saying, stressing the United States is not a "deadbeat" nation that skirts its financial obligations.

Biden discussed meetings Tuesday with House Speaker Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., and others as "productive."

"Everyone came to the meeting in good faith," he said. "Every leader in the room understands the consequences if we fail to pay our bills."

The Biden administration and congressional Republicans remain at loggerheads over raising the \$31.4 trillion debt ceiling ahead of its June 1 deadline.

Speaker of the House Kevin McCarthy on



Wednesday continued to insist on spending cuts and work requirements for public assistance programs as part of any deal to raise the debt limit.

"When we talk about work requirements, President Biden voted for that. President Clinton signed it into law," McCarthy said.

The GOP is using its majority in the House to push back against Democratic spending, an issue they have tied to raising the debt ceiling, linking past expenditures to future plans.

The president and his colleagues in the Democratic Party, however, insist the debt ceiling must be raised without conditions to make sure the country's bills are paid.

Biden said that, during discussions on Tuesday, all leaders involved recognized that defaulting on debt obligations would be "catastrophic."

"America is not a dead-beat nation," the president said. "We pay our bills."

Congress has raised the debt ceiling 78 times

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# OPINION

## Schools banning books fail to teach history needed to keep democracy

By Boaz Dvir  
Penn State

The Florida Department of Education announced on April 10 that it had rejected 35% of the social studies books publishers submitted for approval and use in the state's public schools. The move was based on a determination the books contain references to social justice issues "and other information" not aligned with Florida Law.

The decision garnered a great deal of media attention. But it was just the latest in a series of efforts around the country to limit students' access to books, lessons and courses about certain historical and societal topics, often dealing with race.

At least 36 states have halted or are seeking the legal means to stop teachers from examining racism in their classrooms.

School districts around the country have banned books about issues ranging from racism to the Holocaust to the LGBTQ community. Parent groups have campaigned to restrict the instruction of such difficult topics as slavery.

Moms for Liberty, and other groups and individuals opposing the instruction of some of these topics, say they're protecting children from divisive, identity-shaming, indoctrinating and pornographic material.

In my view, some segments of American society are turning their backs on history.

That comes at a cost. I've seen it firsthand. I direct Penn State programs -- the Holocaust, Genocide and Human Rights Education Initiative and the Hammel Family Human Rights Initiative -- that give my colleagues and me a real-time glimpse into the vulnerable state of K-12 instruction about difficult topics.

Many educators have been shying away from sensitive issues. The 2022 American Instructional Resources Survey, a survey about teachers' views on what they can teach, by Rand Education and Labor, which focuses on school and education issues, shows the new and proposed state laws restricting the instruction of difficult topics made a quarter of the country's 4 million teachers hesitant or downright scared to teach those subjects. This was true even when the educators taught in a state that had not at the time proposed or enacted such a law.

As a result, research shows, students may be deprived of vital lessons such as the global persistence of crimes against humanity and the factors that give rise to genocides.

As a documentary filmmaker and assistant professor of journalism, I often discuss difficult topics with students. After a rough-cut university screening of my forthcoming documentary *Cojot*, which tells the story of Holocaust survivor Michel Cojot's 1970s quest to kill his father's Nazi executioner, two college students approached me apologetically, saying, "We've never heard of this."

Studies show that 4 out of every 10 young Americans know very little about the Holocaust.

To spare them embarrassment, I noted the protagonist's obscurity. That's why I've made this film, I said.

Shaking their heads, the students stressed they'd "never heard about any of this."

They were talking about the Holocaust.

As the grandchild of Holocaust survivors, I felt disturbed. As an educator, I wondered if we're failing to give students the knowledge and insight they need to sustain and thrive in a 21st-century democracy.

Costly ignorance

Many Americans born between 1981 and 2012, according to a 2020 Schoen Consulting national poll, lack "basic knowledge" of the Nazis' murder of 6 million Jews and millions of people with disabilities, homosexuals, Romani and members of other oppressed groups. About two-thirds of respondents grossly underestimated the number of Hitler's Jewish victims and knew little to nothing about the world's largest-ever death camp, Auschwitz.

## The Perils and Practicalities of California's Reparations Task Force Proposal: A Conservative Perspective

In the quest for recompense for historical injustices, the California Reparations Task Force has taken a bold and controversial step. Recommending payments of up to \$1.2 million to every qualifying Black resident, the nine-member panel aims to address the long-standing racial disparities and inequalities in the state. But as the nation witnesses this unfolding drama, it is essential to ask: Are we merely embarking on a well-intentioned but ultimately impractical endeavor?

While the moral case for reparations is clear, the practical implications of such a policy are far from straightforward. The task force's recommendations attempt to break down payments by types of historical discrimination, such as redlining by banks and overpolicing leading to mass incarceration. Assigning monetary values to different timeframes and experiences raises the question: Can we accurately quantify pain and suffering, particularly across multiple generations?

Moreover, the administrative challenge of determining eligibility and distributing funds threatens to add to the bureaucratic morass. With an already bloated and inefficient public sector, would the state of California be able to implement a reparations policy effectively and fairly? The

risk of further resentment and frustration among the affected population is real, as the reparations debate exposes deep-seated divisions and complex historical relationships.

The emotionally charged public meeting in Oakland, California, showcased the vast range of opinions on the topic of reparations. Disagreements and interruptions were abundant, with some attendees demanding larger payments while others called for alternative solutions. This discord highlights the seemingly insurmountable task of finding a universally acceptable resolution. The reparations issue demands a level-headed approach that balances justice, fairness and practicality.

For conservatives, the reparations debate raises concerns about the viability of compensating for historical injustices through financial means. The task force's proposal, while rooted in empathy and a desire for justice, may be an example of progressive overreach. As we grapple with the moral imperatives of reparations, we must also consider the potential unintended consequences of such a policy.

It is crucial to remember that California, despite entering the Union as a free state in 1850, failed to guarantee freedom for a decade after emancipation. The state's historical relationship with racial inequality is intricate and cannot be easily untangled. Addressing historical wrongs is undeniably important, but it must be done with an eye to the potential consequences of well-intentioned but ill-conceived policies.

The conservative viewpoint calls for prudent skepticism in the face of ambitious proposals such as the one put forth by the California Reparations Task Force. We must recognize the risks of opening a Pandora's box of grievances that may never be fully addressed, sowing discord and dissatisfaction. Instead of getting mired in the quagmire of reparations, the focus should be on forward-looking policies that foster equal opportunity and justice for all.

As California legislators mull over the task force's recommendations, they must weigh both the moral imperatives and the practical challenges of reparations. A more prudent approach would be to invest in education, infrastructure, and social programs that promote upward mobility and dismantle sys-

temic barriers to success. This way, we can build a more just and equitable future without indulging in an unwieldy and contentious reparations scheme.

The California Reparations Task Force's proposal, although without legal weight, has sparked a crucial conversation. But as the nation watches this unfolding debate, it is essential to approach the issue with prudence, skepticism, and a commitment to finding solutions that truly promote a more just and equitable future. In the end, the path to progress may not lie in reparations, but rather in a renewed dedication to the values of opportunity and fairness that have guided this nation since its founding.

An additional aspect worth considering is the potential ripple effect of the reparations debate across the country. California's actions could set a precedent that encourages other states to grapple with their own histories and implement similar policies. While it is vital to address past injustices, we must also contemplate the possible consequences of a patchwork of reparations programs throughout the nation. These programs could create further complexities in terms of resource allocation, interstate relationships and a perceived sense of fairness.



ARMSTRONG WILLIAMS

## White House, Congress playing Russian roulette with debt ceiling

By Harlan Ullman,  
Arnaud de Borchgrave  
Distinguished  
Columnist

Not for the first time, both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue are playing political Russian roulette. Except this time, all six chambers are loaded with bullets. It will be America that is the victim.

The issue is the debt ceiling. And, in fairness, if American politics and governance were rational, the collision between what should be two valid and competing arguments would be averted. On the one hand, the White House is correct that the debt ceiling must be raised. On the other, Republican members of Congress are correct that spending is out of control and the growing national debt is unsustainable.

The click of the gun's hammer being cocked is deafening. Soon, if the stalemate persists, the trigger will be pulled and the United States will default. Some argue that this is a Y2K problem. The outcome will be de minimis.

Reality is different. How, for example, will the federal government pay its employees, some of whom actually work on Capitol Hill, and 1.3 million Americans serving on active duty to defend the nation? Social Security and Medicare checks will not be sent. And companies providing goods and

services for the government will be self-financing.

Who knows what the impact will be on stock and financial markets, as well as on international trade. These are among the most obvious of affected institutions. Oh, and by the way, who will be guarding the borders, with many tens of thousands of asylum seekers camped out on the southern side of the Rio Grande?

This game of chicken can also be portrayed as two driverless cars headed directly at each other, if roulette is not your game. President Joe Biden and House Speaker Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., are exercising give-no-inch positions at a time when the nation is at grave financial risk. The bet is that one side or the other will come to their senses. But suppose neither flinches and the hammer strikes one of the loaded chambers?

The expiration of the debt ceiling, raised 78 times since 1960, 49 by Republicans and 29 by Democrats, was surely not a surprise, as were the attacks on Pearl Harbor and Sept. 11. Still, there are only a few weeks to resolve this looming crisis. The president attending the G-7 conference in Hiroshima, Japan, from Friday through Sunday could be a further complication if he were needed in the negotiations. Common sense could prevail.

Yet, the unprecedented

state of political divisions in the United States, arguably broader and in some cases as deep as the cause of the Civil War, could override good judgment and rationality. Donald Trump made this case in last week's CNN-sponsored New Hampshire pep rally, asserting better to default now than later. Some Republicans agree with him. Does one also hear the sound of lemmings racing off a cliff?

America has a colossal spending problem that will only worsen. America's population is aging and with COVID-19 over, life expectancies will rise. Fewer young Americans will be required to support more older, retired Americans. And the uncontrolled, built-in costs of virtually all government spending programs will exacerbate this condition.

Unlike parliamentary governments, ours cannot resign en masse to form a new one. Some argue that selecting 537 names randomly from any telephone book would produce a more effective government than the one we elect. And given that making spending cuts and raising taxes to balance the budget as the 2024 elections approach is a fantasy, what is to be done?

Actually, one answer is present. The most effective and least painful way of resolving the debt crisis is to enhance productivity. That, in turn, increases GDP

that increases government revenues.

Over the past two years, Congress has appropriated about \$5 trillion through the Build Back Better; Inflation Reduction; and Chips and Science acts. Much of this is designed to align American infrastructure, broadly defined, with the 21st century. A National Infrastructure Investment Bank could be funded with public and private money for that purpose.

Since \$5 trillion or so is in the piggy bank, why cannot both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue agree on where and how it will be spent, so that the nation gets the biggest bang for all these bucks? Yes, cuts need to be made in the budget. However, a growing GDP is a better solution.

This will require a ceasefire in political animosity and hostility. Since we cannot throw all the bums out until November 2024, this may be the least worst solution.

Harlan Ullman is senior adviser at Washington's Atlantic Council, the prime author of "shock and awe" and author of "The Fifth Horseman and the New MAD: How Massive Attacks of Disruption Became the Looming Existential Danger to a Divided Nation and the World at Large." Follow him @harlankullman. The views and opinions expressed in this commentary are solely those of the author.



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## Supreme Court declines to hear challenge to Illinois assault weapons ban

By Matt Bernardini  
UPI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday refused to block an Illinois assault weapons ban, siding against gun-rights advocates and a gun store.

The court did not explain its reasoning for denying the case.

According to the Chicago Tribune, the Naperville City Council had approved a local ban on specific high-powered firearms after a shooting at a Fourth of July parade last year. The state of Illinois in January then passed a law banning the sale of specific semi-automatic guns.

Robert Bevis, owner of Law Weapons & Supply, and the National Association for Gun Rights, then filed a lawsuit, arguing that the ban violates Second Amendment rights.

Bevis and the NAGR asked the Supreme Court to take the case after a U.S. District Court and the 7th Circuit Court

of Appeals declined to issue an injunction.

Illinois Attorney General Kwame Raoul argued that the firearms that were being banned were outside Second Amendment protections for "firearms that are 'commonly used' for self-defense."

The law bans the sale of certain kinds of high-powered firearms and high-capacity ammunition magazines.

The people behind the lawsuit "have not shown that their inability to purchase or sell a narrow category of firearms -- assault weapons and (large-capacity magazines) -- will irreparably harm them," Raoul said. "By contrast, the act's restrictions on assault weapons and (large-capacity magazines) promote a compelling interest in protecting the public and saving lives."

Bevis and the NAGR had argued that the restrictions were unlawful because they prohibited weapons that "are possessed by millions of law-abiding citizens for lawful purposes, including self-defense in the home."

## Abortion

continued from page 1  
weeks' gestation to 12.

Republicans had last week approved the measure but were stymied on Saturday with a veto by Cooper who called the bill "a dangerous abortion ban" that would have "devastating impacts on women's reproductive healthcare."

The GOP lawmakers, who already had a supermajority in the Senate, were able to override Cooper due to the slim veto-proof supermajority they had gained in the House last month when Democrat state Rep. Tricia Cotham switched parties.

The law, which will go into effect July 1, includes other restrictions, such as allowing healthcare providers to object to performing the procedure "on moral, ethnical or religious grounds."

It also mandates that the procedure be performed in a hospital, that anyone seeking the procedure undergo three in-person appointments scheduled days apart and that doctors confirm the probable gestational age of a fetus is no more than 70 days, or 10 weeks, before distributing abortion-inducing drugs, among other restrictions.

The law also includes \$160 billion in funding for childcare, foster care and parental leave.

Following the vote Tuesday, Cooper lashed out at the Republican lawmakers, saying strong majorities in the state don't want right-wing politi-

cians interfering in healthcare.

"North Carolinians now understand that Republicans are unified in their assault on women's reproductive freedom and we are energized to fight back on this and other critical issues facing our state," he said in a statement. "I will continue doing everything I can to protect abortion access in North Carolina because women's lives depend on it."

Cooper highlighted that the measure was passed by several Republican lawmakers who had promised to protect women's reproductive freedom -- seemingly a jab at Cotham who vowed to fight to codify abortion protections into the state's Constitution and to "continue my strong record of defending the right to choose."

The White House on Tuesday night also described the bill as being "out of touch" with the majority of North Carolinians.

"The North Carolina ban will harm patients and threaten doctors for providing essential care," White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said in a statement.

The abortion restriction was pursued in North Carolina as Republicans the nation over pushed similar restrictions after the conservative-leaning Supreme Court last year overturned the 1973 landmark Roe vs. Wade ruling, which provided federal protections for abortion.

Those in favor of S.B. 20 cheered the override on Tuesday, with the an-

ti-abortion Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America advocacy group accusing Cooper of having deployed bully tactics in "the fight for life."

"Elected officials and candidates across this country should take note how pro-life leaders stood up to the extreme abortion agenda of the Democrats to protect life and serve mothers," Marjorie Dannenfelser, the non-profit's president, said in a statement.

The North Carolina Republican Party framed the override of Cooper's veto as Democrats being out of step with their constituents.

"Republican lawmakers are to be commended for standing up to this desperate intimidation campaign," it said.

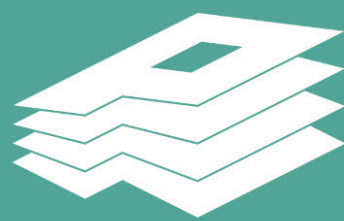
While the vote is being cheered by the right, civil, reproductive and women's rights advocates see it as regressive.

"This is a devastating loss for the fundamental rights of North Carolinians," American Civil Liberties Union of North Carolina Senior Police counsel Liz Barber said in a statement.

"This abortion ban is life-threatening. Forcing someone to carry a pregnancy to term and give birth against their will is a human rights violation of the highest order."

Pro-Choice North Carolina vowed in a statement that they will keep fighting to protect access to the medical procedure.

"We are the majority, and we will not stop fighting for abortion access and reproductive freedom for all."



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# Nation's largest publisher files lawsuit challenging Florida county's book bans

By Matt Bernardini  
UPI

Free-speech group PEN America and publisher Penguin Random House filed a lawsuit on Wednesday in federal court, challenging book bans in a Florida Panhandle county.

The lawsuit alleges that administrators and school board members in Florida's Escambia County School District have violated the First and 14th amendments. The groups say the books that are being banned are "disproportionately books by non-white and/or LGBTQ+ authors."

"Books have the capacity to change lives for the better, and students in particular deserve equitable access to a wide range of perspectives," said Ni-

har Malaviya, CEO of Penguin Random House, in a statement, according to USA Today. "Censorship, in the form of book bans like those enacted by Escambia County, are a direct threat to democracy and our Constitutional rights."

Book bans have increased in recent years in mainly conservative states, such as Florida, where its governor and Republican majority lawmakers have capitalized on divisive culture issues.

Wednesday's complaint states that the school board has targeted 197 books for removal, with 59% addressing themes relating to race or LGBTQ identity.

Most of the books were banned after complaints from a single teacher in the county.

One of the authors who had



their books removed, Ashley Hope Pérez, told Publishers Weekly that the book bans deprive children of a complete education.

"Young readers in Escambia schools and across the nation

deserve a complete and honest education, one that provides them with full access in libraries to a wide range of literature that reflects varied viewpoints and that explores the diversity of

human experiences," said Pérez, author of *Out of Darkness*, one of the books targeted for removal by the school district. "As a former public high school English teacher, I know firsthand how important libraries are. For many young people, if a book isn't in their school library, it might as well not exist."

Two parents, Lindsay Durtschi and Ann Novakowski, have also joined the lawsuit as plaintiffs.

"Without diverse representation in literature and inclusive dialogue in the classroom, we are doing irreparable harm to the voices and safety of students in Florida," Durtschi told Publishers Weekly. "Our children need the adults in their lives to stand up for the promise of cooperation and equity."



## Uber adds family, teen, safety features

By Patrick Hilsman  
UPI

Uber announced a series of changes and upgrades to its ride-sharing service at its third annual GO-GET conference in New York City.

Newly implemented features include the option for users to create a family profile that will allow their family members to book rides from linked accounts and will provide parents with location updates.

"Setting up a family profile allows you to link multiple Uber accounts together -- so you can pay for rides and deliveries from a central account, plus receive real-time location and order updates,"

Uber said in a press release Wednesday.

"We know that it takes a village to keep teens going and growing. From sports practices and mall trips to first job interviews and more, teens are always on the move but getting them there isn't always easy," the company said.

The company also announced that it is setting up teen accounts for the guardians of teens between ages 13 and 17.

The feature will only allow highly rated drivers to participate and will include safety measures like Ride-Check, Verify My Ride, an audio recording system and live trip tracking. The new feature also allows parents and guardians to

contact the driver during a trip.

Additionally, Uber is rolling out Uber Car Seat in New York City and Los Angeles. The service allows parents to order an Uber equipped with a Nuna's RAVA car seat.

In August, Uber announced that the company was implementing an option for riders to text 911 from their phones along with an option to contact a safety agent.

"Not every situation rises to the level of an emergency, and users have asked us for an option for those less critical moments that don't require police, fire or medical assistance," said Uber Product Manager Rebecca Payne.



## After 10-day manhunt in 3 states, second Philadelphia prison escapee recaptured

By Patrick Hilsman  
UPI

A second inmate who escaped a Philadelphia prison on May 7 has been recaptured at a residence in the city.

Ameen Hurst, 18, escaped from the Philadelphia Industrial Correctional Center, along with fellow inmate Nasir Grant, 24, by cutting a hole in the facility's fence.

"U.S. Marshals Service investigators arrested Philadelphia prison escapee Ameen Hurst at 8:30 a.m. in the 6100 block of Washington Avenue in Philadelphia. The 10-day manhunt covered three states, dozens of leads, and hundreds of working hours," the Philadelphia office of the U.S. Marshals Service tweeted Wednesday.

Deputy U.S. Marshal Robert Clarke told a news conference that one of Hurst's relatives contacted law enforcement to arrange a negotiated surrender, but that Hurst did not comply with the arrangement.

"We had three deadlines and were in constant communication, and [Hurst] significantly missed those deadlines," said Clarke.

Authorities say Hurst's brother also was arrested but did not provide further

information.

USMS\_philly investigators arrested Philadelphia prison escapee Ameen Hurst at 8:30 am in the 6100 block of Washington Ave in Phila. The 10-day manhunt covered 3 states, dozens of leads, and hundreds of working hours. We will always be here for @PhillyPolice and our LE partners! pic.twitter.com/MVWMNjSvOi— USMS Philadelphia (@USMS\_Philly) May 17, 2023

Philadelphia Police Deputy Commissioner Frank Vanore said Hurst is accused of four slayings between 2020 and 2021.

U.S. Marshals recaptured Grant Thursday, shortly after police arrested Xianni Stalling, 21, on suspicion that she had aided the escapees. Stalling was charged with escape and hindering apprehension, conspiracy and criminal use of a communication facility.

Grant was in prison on drug and gun charges.

On Monday, U.S. Marshals arrested Michael Abrams, 21, on suspicion of helping the escapees.

Assistant District Attorney Lyandra Retacco said, "We are pleased that these escapees and their conspirators have been arrested without incident."

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## Debt

continued from page 1

since 1960, the majority of which occurred during Republican presidencies. That includes three times during the previous Trump administration.

Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen has warned repeatedly of economic catastrophe if an agreement on raising the debt ceiling is not made prior to the June deadline. Not only would it mean a delay in payments to federal employees, Social Security and other payments, it would spike consumer-level inflation and create global havoc given the important role the U.S. economy

has in the global market.

Biden stressed, however, that a default will not happen on his watch.

"The nation has never defaulted in its debt and we never will," he said.

The president said earlier this week he would skip out on the so-called Quad summit planned for next week in Sydney to attend to debt concerns. He is, however, going ahead with a meeting of the G7 set for Friday.

Biden said he plans to return from his overseas trip in time for a Sunday press conference to discuss progress on preventing a default on U.S. debt obligations. McCarthy, for his part, said Tuesday that a breakthrough was possible "by the end of the week."

# Missouri terminates controversial rule limiting gender-affirming care

By Darryl Coote  
UPI

Missouri has terminated a controversial emergency rule that would have greatly limited access to gender-affirming healthcare in the state.

The rule was terminated Tuesday, according to a brief notice published on the website of Missouri Secretary of State John Ashcroft.

UPI has contacted Ashcroft's office for comment.

Promulgated last month by Missouri's Republican attorney general, Andrew Bailey, the rule placed restrictions on gender-affirming care by clarifying state laws to prohibit such medical treatment by arguing it is "experimental."

Some of the requirements that were to be applied to gender-affirming care included mandating at least 18 months of therapy, a comprehensive screening for autism and three years of documented proof of a "long-lasting, persistent and intense pattern of gender dysphoria" before a patient could receive treatment.

Minors seeking such medical care were also to receive an annual comprehensive screening for social media addiction and compulsion.

Bailey had said the new rule was needed to protect children from what he described as experimental medicine, despite leading medical organizations, such as the American Medical Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics and the World Health Organi-



zation, supporting the administration of gender-affirming care.

After it was promulgated, the rule was met with litigation, and a circuit court judge in St. Louis County early this month issued a temporary restraining order against it that ended Monday.

The reason for the rule's termination was not made public, but state House minority leader Crystal Quade, a Democrat, accused Bailey on Tuesday of having "grossly overstepped his legal authority."

"It isn't surprising he withdrew his unconstitutional rule knowing another embarrassing court defeat was inevitable," Quade said in a statement. "Missourians deserve an attorney general worthy of the office, not one who persecutes innocent Missourians for political gain."

The American Civil Liberties Union of Missouri also celebrated the termina-

tion of the rule Tuesday as Bailey having "finally joined everyone else in recognizing that his hasty attempt to usurp other branches of government cannot withstand scrutiny."

"His transparently faux concern for trans youth could not mask that his willingness to abuse his office in an attempt to erase from public all transgender Missourians," the civil rights organization said in a statement. "Today's actions are a victory for Missourians' right to bodily autonomy, but the fight is not over."

The rule was issued as his office initiated an investigation into a St. Louis pediatric transgender center where an employee said they had witnessed an array of mistreatment. The Washington University Transgender Center said that it has conducted a review following the allegations and that "physicians and staff at the center follow appropriate

policies and procedures and treat patients according to the accepted standards of care."

The termination of the rule also comes a week after the state's general assembly passed Senate Bill 39, which bans transgender students from competing in school sports that match their gender identity, and Senate Bill 49, which bans doctors from prescribing hormones or puberty blockers to a minor in order to aid their gender transition.

The laws have yet to be signed by Gov. Mike Parson, whom the ACLU of Missouri is urging to veto the bills, stating they go against the recommendations of every major medical association.

The move also comes as Republican-led states seek to limit or outright ban gender-affirming care for minors.

According to the Movement Advancement Project, more than 15 states have implemented such bans.

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# Global temperatures predicted to soar to record levels over next five years

By A.L. Lee  
UPI

Global temperatures are likely to soar to historic levels over the next five years due to increased greenhouse gases that would give rise to extreme weather events, according to a new warning from the World Meteorological Organization.

The report, released Wednesday by the international climate agency in Geneva, says 2023 through 2027 will likely go down as the hottest years on record, with a 66% chance of the average annual surface temperature usurping the climate goal set by the Paris Agreement to shrink global warming through the next century.

"This report does not mean that we will permanently exceed ... long-term warming over many years. However, WMO is sounding the alarm that we will breach the 1.5°C level on a temporary basis with increasing frequency," said WMO Secretary-General Petteri Taalas.

A warming El Niño weather pattern was also expected to develop in the coming months and would "combine with human-induced climate change to push global temperatures into uncharted territory," Taalas explained, adding that "We need to be prepared."

The chances of exceeding the average global surface temperature has gone up steadily since the 1.5°C goal was set in 2015, leading climate scientists to predict the short-term global heatwave.

The annual mean global near-surface temperature for each year between 2023 and 2027 is predicted to fall between 1.1°C and 1.8°C higher than average, the agency said.

Extreme temperatures would be felt across a wide swath of the planet, leading to torrential rains in the Sahel, northern Europe, Alaska and northern Siberia, and reduced rainfall this year over the Amazon and parts of Australia, the report notes.



The report comes as numerous other climate warnings have emerged in recent months, including the State of Global Climate 2022, released by the United Nations in November, which declared the last eight years as the hottest ever on record.

A separate study published in January predicted at least half of the world's glaciers will melt and disappear before the turn of the next century as global warming continued on an upward trajectory despite meaningful efforts in recent years to address the problem.

The world's oceans would rise dramatically under such a scenario and lead to flooding and other major disasters around the world.

In another sign of growing concern, the Global Report on Internal Displacement, released last Thursday, said more than 32 million people

worldwide were forced from their homes by weather-related disasters in 2022.

The United States ranked sixth in the world for the most people displaced by climate disasters with 543,000.

Efforts to curtail the climate crisis have picked up steam around the world in recent years, with numerous climate summits and President Joe Biden helping to galvanize the American response.

In recent months, the Biden administration has acted with increased urgency to align with the international climate blueprint, with the United States on "a clear path" to achieving its climate goals due to the president's "all-hands-on-deck strategy for accelerating key clean energy technology innovations," the White House said previously.

# Americans have high anxiety about safety

By Cara Murez  
HealthDay News

Americans are less anxious than they were in early 2020, at the dawn of the COVID-19 pandemic, but many still have anxiety about keeping themselves or their families safe.

In a new poll by the American Psychiatric Association (APA), 70% of U.S. adults reported being anxious or extremely anxious about keeping safe.

About 78% of adults expressed anxiety over inflation. About 70% were anxious about a potential recession.

And 67% had worries about gun violence, including 42% who were "very anxious" about gun violence, which was an increase of 5% over the previous month.

"Ongoing stress about our basic needs can lead to other negative mental health effects," said APA president Dr. Rebecca Brendel.

"The impact of this stress means that psychiatrists will need to continue work with the communities they serve, the larger mental health field and policymakers to ensure those who need care can access it," Brendel said in an APA news release.

The association surveyed about 2,200 adults between April 20 and April 22, weighting the data to approximate a target sample of adults based on gender, educational attainment, age, race and region.

Overall, 37% felt more anxious this year than at this time last year. That was also an increase of 5%. In all, 30% said they had talked about mental health issues with a mental health professional in the past few years, up 4% from 2022.

Among the other findings:

78% of participants agreed that a person's mental health has an impact on physical health

78% also agreed that untreated mental illness has a significant negative impact on families

64% agreed that untreated mental illness has a significant negative impact on the economy

"The majority of the public understands something we've been saying for a long time: Your mental health is about your health," said Dr. Saul Levin, APA CEO and medical director. "It's contingent upon us as a field to continue to spread that message" along with the messages "that those who are experiencing mental health concerns aren't alone and that there are ways to receive help."

In 2020, 80% of respondents were anxious about safety. More information:

The U.S. National Library of Medicine has more on anxiety.

# Marijuana use may increase risk of leg artery disease

By Cara Murez  
HealthDay News

Smoking cigarettes has long been linked to peripheral artery disease (PAD), a condition where the buildup of plaque narrows arteries and limits blood flow to the legs or arms.

Now, a new study suggests that marijuana may have a similar impact, after finding that users had three times the risk of developing PAD.

Although the study is preliminary and doesn't determine whether the impact is all from smoking weed or other popular methods of using the drug, such as eating marijuana-infused gummies, it may be a red flag for users and could be something their doctors should ask about to gauge risk factors for their patients.

"Marijuana users should seek early evaluation by a healthcare professional if they have symptoms such as leg pain while walking, slower/no hair growth and coldness in the leg as there seems to be an increased risk for developing PAD in this patient population," said study authors Dr. Hirva Vyas from Hackensack University Medical Center in New Jersey and Dr. Harsh Jain, a resident with the Montefiore Health System in New York City.

To study this, Vyas and Jain used data from U.S. National Inpatient Samples from 2016 to 2019.

More than 620,000 of the 30 million patients were marijuana users. They had an average age of just over 37 years. Among them, more than 2,400 also had PAD.

While the marijuana users had a much greater risk of developing PAD, there wasn't a statistically significant increased risk for death or surgical intervention.

It's possible marijuana use changes how blood clots or affects peripheral vascular tone, the study authors suggested.

The study found that marijuana users were at an increased risk even after controlling for some variables, including smoking cigarettes, Vyas and Jain said.

Although the database didn't have information on the method of consumption, "it is paramount to note that the active ingredient THC is metabolized in different ways when smoked versus ingested, and may have differing risk factors associated with each," Vyas and Jain said.

About 6.5 million Americans have PAD, and nearly 50 million Americans now report using marijuana, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Dr. Robert Page, a professor in the departments of clinical pharmacy and physical medicine at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus in Denver, cautioned that the study shows an association and not a cause-and-effect link.

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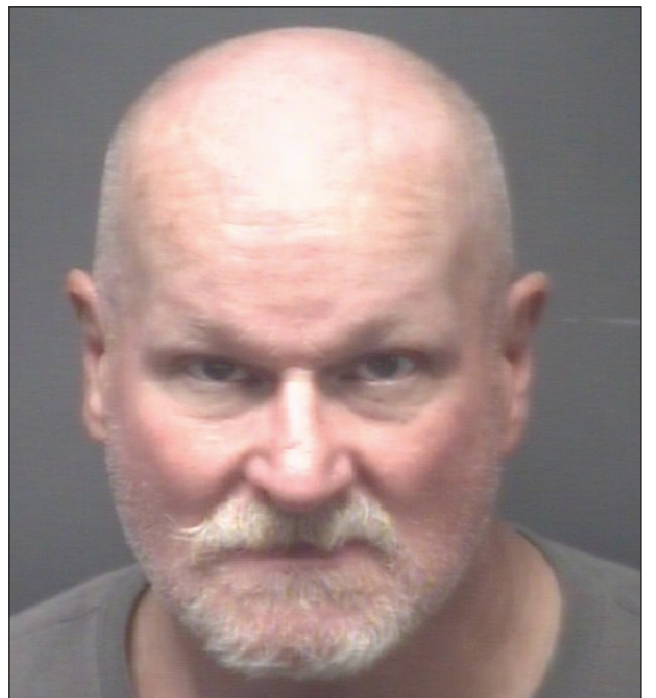
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# Formula 1's Emilia Romagna Grand Prix canceled due to floods

By Alex Butler  
UPI

The 2023 Emilia Romagna Grand Prix -- scheduled for this weekend -- is canceled because of severe flooding in Imola, Italy, Formula 1 announced Wednesday morning.

Practices for the sixth race on the Formula 1 calendar were to begin Friday morning at the Autodromo Enzo e Dino Ferrari facility. The main event was set for Sunday morning.

"It is such a tragedy to see what has happened to Imola and Emilia-Romagna, the town and region that I grew up in, and my thoughts and prayers are with the victims of the flooding and the families and communities affected," Formula 1 president and CEO Stefano Domenicali said in a news release.

"I want to express my gratitude and admiration for the incredible emergency services who are working tirelessly to help those who need help and alleviate the situation -- they are heroes and the whole of Italy is proud of them."

Domenicali said the de-



cision was made to "ensure safety and not create extra burden for the authorities while they deal with this very awful situation."

Nello Musumeci, Italy's minister of civil protection and maritime policies, said Wednesday at a news conference that 50,000 people are without electricity and

100,000 cannot use phones as a result of the floods. He said 5,000 people have been evacuated.

Musumeci said average rainfall in the area was about 8 inches over 36 hours, with some areas reaching 19 inches.

Irene Priolo, the vice president of Emilia-Romagna

told reporters that eight people have died as a result of the floods. Widespread flooding has impacted 24 municipalities and 14 rivers.

Reigning Formula 1 champion Max Verstappen, who is the top driver again this season, said he was "supportive" of the decision to cancel the race.

"Our thoughts are with all those affected by the severe rainfall and flooding in the greater Emilia Romagna region," Verstappen said in a statement on social media.

"We wish you all strength to ensure your safety throughout this period."

Several other top drivers, including Verstappen's

Red Bull Racing teammate Sergio Perez, Lando Norris, George Russell, Charles Leclerc and Lewis Hamilton, expressed support for those impacted by the floods.

Sorry for the fans that this weekend's race has been cancelled but the safety of everyone involved always has to come first.

Wishing all the best to everyone in the Emilia-Romagna region and surrounding areas that have been affected by these floods.— George Russell (@GeorgeRussell63) May 17, 2023

The Formula 1 schedule will continue with the Monaco Grand Prix. That event -- dubbed Monte Carlo -- will be held May 28 at the Circuit de Monaco inside the Monte Carlo neighborhood in Monaco.

"My thoughts and those of the entire FIA family are with those affected by the terrible situation in the Emilia-Romagna region," FIA president Mohammed Ben Sulayem said. "The safety of everyone involved and recovery efforts are the top priority at this time."

# Victor Wembanyama 'trying to win a ring ASAP' after Spurs win lottery

By Alex Butler  
UPI

Victor Wembanyama is "trying to win a ring as soon as possible" with the San Antonio Spurs, who won the 2023 NBA Draft lottery and are expected to make him the No. 1 pick, the French center said.

The Spurs claimed the right to make the top pick -- in what was dubbed the Wembanyama sweepstakes -- Tuesday night. The 2023 NBA Draft will be June 22 in New York.

"They are getting a team player," Wembanyama said on ESPN's lottery broadcast, when asked about joining the Spurs. "I'm going to win as many games as I can. I'm trying to win a ring ASAP. So be ready."

Wembanyama, 19, is an extremely versatile 7-foot-3 center/forward from Le Chesnay, France. The towering phenom, known for a soft touch and sticky handling, averaged 21.6 points, 10.5 rebounds, 3.1 blocks and 2.5 assists per game this season for Metropolitans 92 of Betclic Elite, the top-tier men's professional league in France.

"It's an incredible night," Spurs general manager Brian Wright said on the broadcast. "I'm incredibly happy for the fans, the entire organization, the community and

city of San Antonio.

"It just means so much. Any time you have a chance to make a No. 1 pick, you get to add to your foundation and core. As we all know, this is a special draft. I can't tell you how excited we are."

Wright called Wembanyama a "unicorn" and an "alien."

"He's unlike anything we've ever seen," Wright said. "The crazy part about it is that he is just crashing the surface. He is incredibly intelligent, incredibly motivated [and] obviously uniquely skilled."

"We are just excited about all the things he brings to the organization, on the court and beyond the court. He is a special talent and we can't wait to get to work."

The Spurs, who finished 22-60 this season, missed the playoffs for the fourth-consecutive year. They last made the No. 1 pick in the 1997 NBA Draft, when they selected Hall of Fame center/forward Tim Duncan.

The Spurs went 22-62 in 1996-97, earning the right to pick Duncan. They were 59-23 two seasons before that draft.

Fellow Hall of Fame big man David Robinson -- the No. 1 pick in 1987 -- was one of several players injured during the 1996-97 campaign, which led to the Spurs' poor record and acquisition of Duncan.



Coach Gregg Popovich, who took over the Spurs in 1996, went on to lead the franchise to five titles from 1999 through 2014. Popovich's Spurs went to the postseason every year from 1997-98 through 2018-19.

The Spurs, Detroit Pistons and Houston Rockets entered the night with matchup 14% odds of landing the top pick. The order of the first 14 picks was determined

by assigning 14 teams an assortment of four-digit number combinations and drawing balls out one-by-one -- with mixing in between selections -- to match those assigned combinations.

The Charlotte Hornets (12.5%) and Portland Trail Blazers (10.5%) also entered the night inside the Top 5 for odds to land the top pick.

The Hornets landed the No. 2 pick. The Blazers earned the No. 3 selection. The Rockets will make the No. 4 pick. The Pistons slipped out of the Top 4 and will make the No. 5 selection.

The Orlando Magic, Indiana Pacers, Washington Wizards, Utah Jazz, Dallas Mavericks, Chicago Bulls, Oklahoma City Thunder, Toronto Raptors, and New Orleans Pelicans will make the next nine respective picks, based on their 2022-23 records.

Pick Nos. 15 to 30 were determined based on reverse order of regular-season records.

Alabama's Brandon Miller, Scoot Henderson of the G League, Central Florida's Taylor Hendricks and twins Ausar and Amen Thompson of Overtime Elite join Wembanyama as the other top prospects in the 2023 NBA Draft class.

# Players cleared to opt in to EA Sports college football game

By Alex Butler  
UPI

Players are cleared to opt in for portrayal of their name, image and likeness in the upcoming EA Sports college football game -- and to profit from inclusion -- for the first time, EA Sports told UPI on Wednesday.

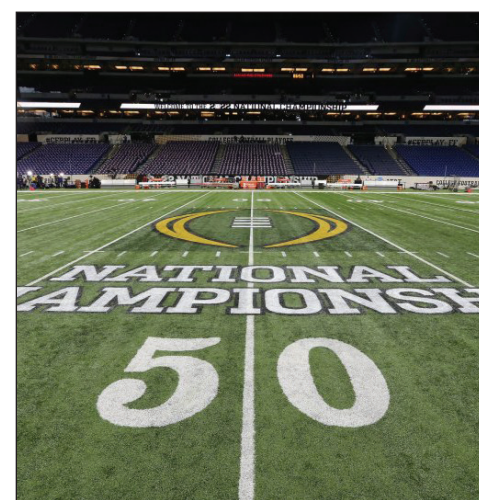
The company announced in 2021 that it would reboot the popular college football video game series.

EA Sports contracted OneTeam Partners to help coordinate the injection of name, image and likeness for eligible Division I Football Bowl Subdivision players into the game.

OneTeam Partners maintains partnerships with the players' unions for several professional sports leagues, including the NFLPA and MLSA.

"We've wanted to feature collegiate athletes in a meaningful way from the start of our journey to bring an EA Sports college football experience back to our fans," EA Sports said in a statement.

"We're excited to have an agreement in place with OneTeam Partners that will enable us to include the names and likenesses of eligible collegiate football athletes at NCAA Division I Football Subdivision schools who opt-in to being featured in EA Sports College Football."



The EA Sports college football series was discontinued in 2013 after a federal judge ruled that the NCAA violated U.S. antitrust law by preventing college athletes from being compensated for usage of their name, image and likeness.

EA Sports did not say how much players would be paid for participating in the game. More than 16,500 players competed in Division I FBS in 2021-22.

ESPN reported that those who opt out of participation will be represented by generic avatars in the game, like in previous versions on the digitalized playing platforms.

EA Sports is expected to release the college football game in 2024.

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# Ax-2 crew carrying personal, mementoes on launch to ISS

By Stefano Coledan  
UPI

The second crew of astronauts set to launch on a totally private space mission said Tuesday they feel inspired by the responsibility and significance of their flight.

The four-member Axiom Space crew is scheduled to lift off at 5:37 p.m. EDT Sunday from Kennedy Space Center in Florida. They'll travel in a SpaceX Crew Dragon capsule on a mission that includes eight days aboard the International Space Station.

At the space station, they'll perform experiments ranging from scientific research, to industrial manufacturing and materials, to new medications.

"I am very honored and happy to be representing all the dreams and all the hopes of all people in Saudi Arabia, and all the women back home and the region," Ax-2 mission specialist Rayyanah Barnawi said at a livestreamed news conference from Orlando, Fla. She will become first Saudi woman



in space.

Barnawi is carrying an earring from her grandmother on the mission. Fellow Saudi mission specialist Ali al-Qarni is bringing

dates and Saudi coffee to share with the space station astronauts.

Former NASA astronaut Peggy Whitson, commander of the mission, said she's taking a necklace

from her wedding day that she has also worn on her three space shuttle missions.

American pilot John Shoffner, an experienced private aviator,

said he has been dreaming of going to space since the early 1960s.

He will carry a memento honoring the memory of astronaut Ed White, who died in the Apollo 1 launchpad fire in 1967. A plastic model of the Gemini spacecraft that Shoffner helped build.

White's spirit, Shoffner said, "I imagine is going with me into space again."

Houston-based Axiom sees the runs to the space station as forerunners of commercial missions it plans to carry out aboard its own space station. The company expects to launch the laboratory in late 2025.

The project will involve partners in academia and industry in future missions to low-Earth orbit.

Sunday's launch will be the 10th human space flight for the Dragon spacecraft nicknamed "Freedom." Axiom sent the first private astronaut crew to the ISS for a 17-day mission in April 2022.

If all goes well, the capsule is scheduled to dock with the space station on Monday morning.



## Biden honors nine, including two fallen NYPD officers, with Medal of Valor award

By Clyde Hughes  
UPI

President Joe Biden honored nine public service officers with Medals of Valor Wednesday morning at the White House.

"These are some of the most meaningful things I do as president," Biden said during the ceremony before awarding the medals. "Knowing you, looking into your eyes, meeting your families, seeing your courage gives me so much hope for the country. You represent the very best of us. You represent the best of who we are as Americans. May God bless you all."

The honorees included New York City Police Officers Wilbert Mora and Jason Rivera, who were killed by a gunman last year while responding to a family dispute in Harlem. A third officer, Sumit Sulan, eventually shot and killed the gunman. He was also honored during the ceremony.

"They are the who and the what of law enforcement in this country should be," said Biden.

Biden also honored New York Fire Department Lt. Justin Hespeler, who rescued a baby from a burning apartment despite being given commands to leave the structure that was severely comprised by

the blaze. Another FDNY member, Patrick Thornton, received an award for saving a man trapped under a capsized board off Staten Island. Retired FDNY Lt. Jason Hickey saved a man from drowning in the Harlem River.

Other honorees included Littleton Police Cpl. Jeffrey Farmer in Colorado, who saved his fellow officer in a shootout with a suspect; Clermont County Sheriff Deputy Bobby Hau Pham in Ohio, who saved a drowning woman whose car was sinking in a lake despite not knowing how to swim himself and Houston Police Sgt. Kendrick Simpo, who disarmed a heavily armed man inside the city's popular and crowded Galleria Mall with his bare hands.

"The nine individuals we recognize have demonstrated extraordinary valor above and beyond the call of duty to save or protect another person's life," said Attorney General Merrick Garland, who introduced Biden at the ceremony. "They acted with great courage and at great risk to themselves."

The Medal of Valor, which was established by Congress and selected by the Justice Department from nominations around the country, is the highest honor given to public service officers nationally.

## Newly discovered Pompeii victims likely died in earthquake

By Patrick Hilsman  
UPI

Archeologists have discovered two skeletons at the site of the Roman city of Pompeii near Naples, Italy.

In AD 79, Mount Vesuvius erupted, covered Pompeii in a thick layer of ash and pumice that suffocated many of the city's inhabitants while the nearby city of Herculaneum was covered in lava.

Pompeii vanished beneath the ash for over a millennium until excavations began in the 17th century.

Archeologists famously discovered cavities in the compacted ash layering the city and soon realized they were left behind by bodies. In the 1800s archeologists created a number of extraordinary recreations of Pompeii's victims by pouring plaster into the hollow cavities in the ash.

The recently discovered skeletons were uncovered by archeologists as renovations and safety upgrades were made to the site known as the Insula of the Chaste Lovers, a part of Pompeii known to have contained residential buildings and a bakery.

"Modern excavation techniques help to shed light on the inferno that over days descended on Pompeii



and led to the complete destruction of the city, killing many of its inhabitants: men, women and children," said Park Director Gabriel Zuchtriegel, "using analysis and the latest methodologies, we can gain an insight into the final moments of those who lost their lives."

Archeologists said the damage to the skeletons indicate that the men died from injuries sustained during the earthquake that accompanied the eruption of Vesuvius.

The injuries sustained, and the fact that the men don't appear to have been killed by lava or suffocation, indicate that a significant number of people likely died as a result of the earthquake that preceded the plume of ash and pumice that eventually buried the

city.

The remains of what was likely a bundle of fabric containing coins and probably pieces of a beaded necklace were discovered alongside one of the bodies. Some of the coins were newly minted during the reign of Emperor Vespasian and one dated to the Republican era and was likely minted over a century before the eruption.

"The discovery of the remains of these two Pompeians in the context of the construction site in the Insula of the Chaste Lovers shows how much there is still to discover about the terrible eruption of AD 79 and confirms the necessity of continuing scientific investigation and excavations," said Italian Minister of Culture, Gennaro Sangiuliano.

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# La Voz Latina

## Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis to send state law enforcement to Texas-Mexico border

By Sheri Walsh  
UPI

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis is planning to send 1,100 state law-enforcement agents and National Guard members to the southern border in Texas as early as Wednesday to enforce immigration law in the wake of Title 42.

The Republican governor made the announcement Tuesday, just weeks before he is expected to launch his presidential campaign and after sparring with President Joe Biden over last week's expiration of Title 42 -- the COVID-era policy that allowed the United States to turn away migrants based on pandemic health concerns.

"The impacts of Biden's border crisis are felt by communities across the nation, and the federal government's abdication of duty undermines the sovereignty of our country and rule of law," DeSantis said in a statement Tuesday.

"At my direction, state agencies including law enforcement and the Florida National Guard, are being deployed to Texas, with assets includ-

ing personnel, boats, and planes," DeSantis said. "While Biden ignores the crisis he created, Florida stands ready to help Texas respond to the crisis."

On Tuesday, Texas Gov. Greg Abbott thanked Florida and Idaho for offering assistance in a letter directed to every governor in the United States. Abbott urged each state to join efforts "to combat President Biden's ongoing border crisis and ensure the safety and security that all Americans deserve."

According to Abbott, Texas has spent more than \$4.5 billion since 2021 on border security and "should not have to shoulder the financial burden of protecting our nation alone."

"I thank these states for proactively addressing this crisis and request other states follow their lead in helping to secure America's border," Abbott wrote.

While the Biden administration sent 24,000 additional agents to border towns to prepare for an influx of immigrants with the expiration of Title 42, Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro

Mayorkas announced Monday a 50% drop in encounters at the U.S. southern border in the two days since Title 42 ended.

DeSantis said he will send 800 Florida National Guard soldiers, 200 agents from the state Department of Law Enforcement Officers, 101 Florida Highway Patrol troopers, as well as 20 agents from Florida's Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and the Department of Emergency Management.

In addition to personnel, Florida will send 5 fixed-wing aircraft, 17 unmanned drones and 10 waterborne vessels to Texas.

The mission is expected to last 30 days.

This is not the first time DeSantis has sent assets to Texas' border with Mexico. In the summer of 2021, the governor sent dozens of state law enforcement officers at a cost of \$1.6 million.

Florida's assistance to Texas comes under the Emergency Management Assistance Compact, which allows states to provide resources to other states during times of emergency.



## MLS: Rapids suspend Max Alves amid sports gambling probe

By Alex Butler  
UPI

Major League Soccer's Colorado Rapids suspended winger Max Alves amid an investigation into his potential involvement in an alleged match manipulation scandal.

The Rapids said Wednesday night they were "aware of reports regarding a Colorado Rapids player in connection with unlawful sports gambling," but did not name the player. They said that player would be "removed from all team activities" as MLS investigates the matter.

Sources told the Denver Post, ESPN and Brazilian news outlet O Globo that Alves was the player placed on paid administrative leave.

O Globo reported earlier Wednesday that Brazilian authorities were investigating the Rapids midfielder and that he is among a group of players who allegedly received payments for match fixing.

O Globo obtained documents from a law enforcement operation concentrated

on the scandal. That material includes a spreadsheet that shows Alves allegedly received about \$12,000 as part of the scheme.

Max has scored... [select all that apply] MLS goal CCL goal Open Cup goal pic.twitter.com/CWwC7VaLAT— Colorado Rapids (@ColoradoRapids) April 27, 2023

MLS said in another statement Wednesday night that it was aware of the reports, which stated that a "current player and a former player" were allegedly involved in the matter under investigation.

"The integrity of the game is critical to the league and MLS takes serious these allegations and any contravention of the league's integrity rules," MLS said. "The current player has been removed from team activities pending an investigation into this matter, which will begin promptly."

Alves joined the Rapids in 2022 from Brazilian club Flamengo. The Rapids will face the Philadelphia Union at 9:30 p.m. EDT Saturday in Commerce City, Colo.

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## Selena Gomez to launch two series with Food Network

By Annie Martin  
UPI

Selena Gomez will launch two new series at Food Network.

Food Network announced in a press release Wednesday that Gomez, 30, is developing two new projects, including a celebration-focused series for the holidays.

Gomez will also launch a second series in 2024 that will see her meet up "with some of the best chefs in the country in a quest to cook their most popular dishes when she visits their kitchens."

Both projects are produced by July Moon Productions and The Intellectual

Property Corporation (IPC), a part of Sony Pictures Television for Food Network.

"The holidays are always huge for Food Network, reaching nearly 60M P2+ viewers, and having Selena kicking off the nearly 100 hours of new and returning holiday programming will certainly make this coming season one to celebrate," Warner Bros. Discovery chairman Kathleen Finch said.

Gomez previously collaborated with Warner Bros. Discovery on the cooking series Selena + Chef for Max, formerly known as HBO Max.

The singer and actress stars with Steve Martin and Martin Short on the Hulu series Only Murders in the Building.