



VIKINGS TRADE UP, DRAFT QB
 McCarthy to develop under O'Connell
SPORTS

FRIDAY
 April 26, 2024

StarTribune

58° **51°**
 Start of a stormy,
 windy weekend. **B6**

'We are writing a rule for the ages'

Historic U.S. Supreme Court case addresses Trump's claim of presidential immunity.

By ANN E. MARIMOW
 Washington Post

The Supreme Court on Thursday appeared ready to reject Donald Trump's sweeping claim that he is immune from prosecution on charges of trying to subvert the 2020

election, but in a way that is likely to significantly delay his stalled federal trial in the nation's capital.

In nearly three hours of oral argument, both conservative and liberal justices grappled with the historic significance of the case, which will set

boundaries for presidential power in the future even as it affects whether Trump faces trial in D.C. before this year's presidential election — in which he is the likely Republican nominee.

Trump is already on trial this week in a separate New York case involving business records connected to a hush-money payment. He faces two other criminal cases as well,

and is the first former president to be indicted. But again and again on Thursday, members of the high court noted that their decision, expected by late June or early July, will not just affect him.

"We are writing a rule for the ages," Justice Neil Gorsuch said.

"This case has huge implications for the presidency, for the future of the presidency,

for the future of the country," Justice Brett Kavanaugh added.

The court seemed unlikely to fully embrace either Trump's broad claim of immunity or the special counsel's position that former presidents have no guarantee of immunity for their official acts. Instead, a majority of justices seemed to be looking for
See SUPREME COURT on A5 ▶

Senior lawyer in trooper's case exits

Shake-up in prosecution of Ryan Londregan, accused of murder in fatal stop.

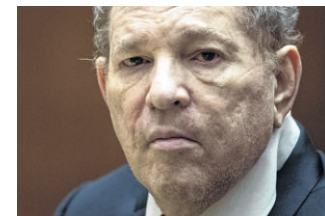
By KIM HYATT and CHRISTOPHER MAGAN
 Star Tribune staff

Hennepin County Attorney Mary Moriarty is requesting the authority to hire outside legal counsel at a time when a senior lawyer in her office who has been leading the prosecution of Minnesota state trooper Ryan Londregan is no longer at the helm of the increasingly controversial case.

Moriarty's office has declined repeated requests in person and email to confirm or deny that Assistant County Attorney Joshua Larson has removed himself as lead prosecutor in Londregan's case. The trooper is charged with murder, manslaughter and assault in the fatal shooting of motorist Ricky Cobb II last summer during a traffic stop in north Minneapolis.

In a statement, Moriarty's office said it is "assembling a new prosecution team to handle what is an extraordinarily resource intensive case that will involve extensive litigation prior to trial."

"While this case continues we must also maintain the critical work of prosecuting
See PROSECUTOR on A3 ▶



Harvey Weinstein

Weinstein conviction overturned

By MICHAEL R. SISAK and DAVE COLLINS • Associated Press

NEW YORK - New York's highest court on Thursday threw out Harvey Weinstein's 2020 rape conviction with a ruling that shocked and disappointed women who celebrated historic gains during the MeToo era and left those who testified in the case bracing for a retrial against the ex-movie mogul.

The court found the trial judge unfairly allowed testimony against Weinstein based on allegations that weren't part of the case.

Weinstein, 72, will remain in prison because he was convicted in Los Angeles in 2022 of another rape. But the New York ruling reopens a painful chapter in America's reckoning with sexual misconduct by powerful figures — an era that began in 2017 with a flood of allegations against Weinstein.

MeToo advocates noted that Thursday's ruling was
See WEINSTEIN on A5 ▶

Intense protest and debate over Palestinian rights and antisemitism have reactivated a wave of activism, including in Minnesota



Pro-Palestinian protesters rally Tuesday at the University of Minnesota. Organizers have called on the U to divest from companies supporting Israel.

'FRAUGHT TIMES' ON CAMPUS

Story by LIZ NAVRATIL • Photo by ANTHONY SOUFFLÉ
 Star Tribune staff

Fadwa Wazwaz attended a pro-Palestinian protest at the University of Minnesota recently and intentionally took a picture with a Jewish attendee to show they could coexist despite the war in the Gaza Strip.

"This has to stop," Wazwaz, a Palestinian U employee, said of the violence.

Jewish student Jon Greenspan felt unnerved a couple of weeks ago when his group, holding Israeli flags and pictures of people taken hostage by Hamas, was surrounded by a few dozen people.

He worried what might happen to Jewish students if no one spoke out and decided "that fear completely

outweighs any other fears I have standing up for myself."

The war between Israel and Hamas, unfolding thousands of miles away, has reinvigorated a wave of activism on college campuses in Minnesota and across the nation. More than 100 pro-Palestinian protesters were arrested at Columbia University, prompting the Ivy League school to cancel in-person classes and religious leaders to encourage Jewish students to celebrate Passover elsewhere. That spurred a flurry of other demonstrations across the country.

Protests in Minnesota have been
See UNIVERSITY on A8 ▶

Perilous work in progress
 U.S. plans for Gaza pier to be ready for aid by early May. **A8**

Israel-Hamas war protests
 USC cancels grad ceremony; more arrests nationwide. **A8**

Immigrant workers sue farm over pay, conditions

By MIKE HUGHLETT
 mike.hughlett@startribune.com

Nearly 40 immigrant workers claim in a federal lawsuit that a central Minnesota vegetable farm shorted their paychecks and subjected them to "deplorable" working and living conditions.

The workers, who hail primarily from Honduras, Mexico and the Dominican Republic, on Monday sued John Svihel and Svihel Vegetable Farm in U.S. District Court for Minnesota. They allege Svihel and his company violated the Trafficking Victims Protection Act.

In a statement, the Svihel farm said the lawsuit "is wrong on the facts and the law, full of falsehoods, mistruths and outright lies."

The workers, represented by Minneapolis law firm Chestnut Cambronne, were recruited between 2013 and 2022 to work at the Svihel farm

in Foley, Minn., about 15 miles northeast of St. Cloud. They hold H-2A visas designed for temporary foreign agricultural workers.

The farmworkers signed employment agreements calling for a workday of seven hours on weekdays and four hours on Saturdays, with Sun-

days off, the suit said. Any additional hours were to be considered overtime.

But workers didn't get Sundays off, and they often toiled 17 hours a day or over 100 hours a week — without overtime pay, the suit alleges: "Paychecks did not reflect this
See LAWSUIT on A3 ▶

TOP NEWS

Scandals squelched: Tabloid publisher agreed to scheme to aid Trump. **A5**

NATION & WORLD

Haitian leader resigns: As violence spirals, council tasked to pick new PM. **A4**

MINNESOTA

Alleged burglary: Transcript details 911 call before state senator's arrest. **B1**

SPORTS

Souhan: Wolves defense sharp vs. Suns going into tonight's Game 3. **C1**

BUSINESS

United scolded after hack: AGs say health care giant needs to do more. **D1**

VARIETY

Swan song: CTC's Peter Brosius says farewell with "Frog and Toad" revival. **E1**

HAVE YOU HEARD?

Wild horses — can't drag them away: Animals will stay in N.D.'s Theodore Roosevelt National Park, lawmaker says. **A2**

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FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

Carol Burnett, 91
Giancarlo Esposito, 66
Actor Jet Li, 61

Actor Kevin James, 59
Melania Trump, 54
Actor Channing Tatum, 44



FRANCISCO SECO • Associated Press

Ukrainian rapper Alyona Alyona, left, and singer Jerry Heil depart from Kyiv to go to Eurovision.

FACES

Eurovision keeps Ukraine in spotlight

Even amid war, Ukraine finds time for the glittery, pop-filled Eurovision Song Contest. Perhaps now even more than ever.

Ukraine's entrants in the pan-continental music competition — the female duo of rapper **Alyona Alyona** and singer **Jerry Heil** — set off from Kyiv for the competition on Thursday. In wartime, that means a long train journey to Poland, then on to Malmö, Sweden.

"We have to ... show people how strong [Ukrainian] women and men are now," said Alyona.

Ukraine has long used Eurovision as a form of cultural diplomacy. That mission became more urgent after Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022. Russian President **Vladimir Putin** has denied that Ukraine existed as a distinct country and people before Soviet times.

Folk-rap band **Kalush Orchestra** took the Eurovision title in 2022 with "Stefania," a song about the frontman's mother that became an anthem to the war-ravaged motherland.

Stones finally set to play Jazz Fest

It looks like the third time is the charm as the 2024 New Orleans Jazz & Heritage festival prepares, again, for the **Rolling Stones** to perform. The festival, which spans two weekends, opened Thursday with dozens of acts playing daily on 14 stages spread across the historic Fair Grounds race course. The Stones play May 2, tickets for which have long been sold out. In 2019, festival organizers thought they had landed the legendary rock band, but the appearance was canceled because lead singer **Mick Jagger** had heart surgery. They tried again in 2021, but a surge in COVID-19 cases ultimately forced the fest to cancel. Now, says festival producer **Quint Davis**, "It's gonna be special." This will be the first time the Stones play Jazz Fest. Opening day acts include rock bands **Widespread Panic** and the **Beach Boys**, reggae artist **Stephen Marley** and jazz vocalist **John Boutte**.

SENTENCED IN IRAN: A rapper in Iran who came to fame over his lyrics about the 2022 death of **Mahsa Amini** and criticizing the Islamic Republic has been sentenced to death, his lawyer and rights activists said Thursday. Iran's state-run IRNA news agency and its judiciary did not formally confirm the death sentence issued against **Toomaj Salehi**, 33.

CRASH: The windmill sails of the Moulin Rouge, a vibrant emblem of Paris' bohemian lifestyle, collapsed Thursday after a show. No injuries were reported. The incident took place shortly before 2 a.m., after the last performance of the night had ended and the audience had left. **Jean-Victor Clerico**, the director of Moulin Rouge, said that a "technical problem" led to the windmill's sails and part of the cabaret's illuminated sign crashing to the ground.

NEWS SERVICES

CORRECTIONS

A story on A8 Wednesday had an extra hyphen in the URL. The UnitedHealth website with information on identity protection services for those affected by a large hack is changechecksupport.com.

An item on E3 Wednesday should have said that TU Dance's "The 3-Women Project" was performed in 2023.

EPA tells coal-fired plants to clean up or shut down

New rules require capture of smokestack emissions.

By MATTHEW DALY
Associated Press

WASHINGTON - Coal-fired power plants would be forced to capture smokestack emissions or shut down under a rule issued Thursday by the Environmental Protection Agency.

New limits on greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuel-fired electric plants are the Biden administration's most ambitious effort yet to roll back planet-warming pollution from the power sector, the nation's second-largest contributor to climate change. The rules are a key part of President Joe Biden's pledge to eliminate carbon pollution from the electricity sector by 2035 and economy-wide by 2050.

The rule was among four measures targeting coal and natural gas plants that the EPA said would provide "regulatory certainty" to the power industry and encourage them to make investments to transition "to a clean energy economy."

EPA Administrator Michael Regan said the rules will reduce pollution and improve public health while supporting the reliable, long-term supply of electricity that America needs.

"One of the biggest environmental challenges facing our nation is man-made pollution that damages our air, our water and our land," Regan said in a speech at Howard University. "Not only is this pollution a major threat to public health



CHRIS CARLSON • Associated Press

New EPA rules limiting power plant emissions are likely to be challenged by industry groups and Republican-leaning states.

— it's pushing our planet to the brink."

Regan called the power plant rules "a defining moment" for his agency as it works to "build a cleaner and healthier future for all of us."

The plan is likely to be challenged by industry groups and Republican-leaning states. They have repeatedly accused the Democratic administration of overreach on environmental regulations and have warned of a looming reliability crisis for the electric grid. The rules issued Thursday are among at least a half-dozen EPA rules limiting power plant emissions and wastewater pollution.

The power plant rule marks the first time the federal government has restricted carbon dioxide emissions from existing coal-fired power plants. The rule also would force future electric plants fueled by coal or gas to control up to

90% of their carbon pollution. The new standards will avoid 1.38 billion metric tons of carbon pollution through 2047, equivalent to the annual emissions of 328 million gas cars, the EPA said, and will provide hundreds of billions of dollars in climate and health benefits, measured in fewer premature deaths, asthma cases and lost work or school days.

"The EPA is systematically dismantling the reliability of the U.S. electric grid," said Rich Nolan, president and CEO of the National Mining Association. "The repercussions of this reckless plan will be felt across the country by all Americans."

Coal provided about 16% of U.S. electricity last year, down from about 45% in 2010. Natural gas provides about 43% of U.S. electricity, with the remainder from nuclear energy and renewables such as wind, solar and hydropower.

N.D. park to keep wild horses

National Park Service had planned to remove them.

By JACK DURA
Associated Press

BISMARCK, N.D. - Wild horses will stay in North Dakota's Theodore Roosevelt National Park amid fears from advocates that park officials would remove the beloved animals from the rugged Badlands landscape, a key lawmaker said Thursday.

Republican U.S. Sen. John Hoeven said he has secured a commitment from the National Park Service to maintain the park's roughly 200 horses. His office said the Park Service will abandon its proposed removal of the horses under an environmental review process begun in 2022.

"This will allow for a healthy herd of wild horses to be maintained at the park, managed in a way to support genetic diversity among the herd and preserve the park's natural resources," Hoeven's office said in a statement.

Park visitors, much to their delight, often encounter the horses while driving or hik-



JACK DURA • Associated Press file

A herd of about 200 wild horses roams Theodore Roosevelt National Park near Medora, N.D., a draw for park visitors.

ing in the rolling, colorful Badlands where a young, future President Theodore Roosevelt hunted and ranched in the 1880s.

The horses roam the park's South Unit near the Western tourist town of Medora. In 2022, park officials began the process of crafting a "livestock plan" for the horses as well as about nine longhorn cattle in the park's North Unit near Watford City. Park officials have said that process aligned with policies to remove non-

native species when they pose a potential risk to resources.

Thousands of people made public comments during the Park Service review, the vast majority of them in support of keeping the horses.

The horses descend from those of Native American tribes and area ranches and from domestic stallions introduced to the park in the late 20th century, according to Castle McLaughlin, who researched the horses for the Park Service in the 1980s.

Overburdened Venice tests 5-euro entry fee for day-trippers

By COLLEEN BARRY
Associated Press

VENICE, ITALY - The fragile lagoon city of Venice launched a pilot program Thursday to charge day-trippers a 5-euro (\$5.35) entry fee that authorities hope will discourage visitors from arriving on peak days and make the city more livable for its dwindling residents.

Visitors arriving at Venice's main train station were greeted with large signs listing the 29 dates through July of the plan's test phase that also designated separate entrances for tourists, and residents, students and workers.

"We need to find a new balance between the tourists and residents," said Simone Venturini, the city's top tourism official. "We need to safeguard the spaces of the residents, of course, and we need to discourage the arrival of day-trip-



LUCA BRUNO • Associated Press

Tourists line up to enter the bell tower at St. Mark's Basilica in the fragile lagoon city of Venice, Italy, on Thursday.

pers on some particular days."

Not all residents, however, are persuaded of the efficacy of the new system in dissuading mass tourism, insisting that only a resurgence in the population will restore balance to a city where narrow alleyways

and water buses are often clogged with tourists.

Hundreds of Venetians protested against the program, marching festively though the city's main bus terminal behind banners reading "No to Tickets, Yes to Services

and Housing." The demonstration wrapped up peacefully in a piazza.

Tourists arriving at the main station encountered almost as many journalists as stewards on hand to politely guide anyone unaware of the new requirements through the process of downloading the QR code to pay the fee.

Arianna Cecilia, a tourist from Rome visiting Venice for the first time, said she thought it was "strange" to have to pay to enter a city in her native country and be funneled through separate entrance ways for tourists. She and her boyfriend were staying in nearby Treviso, and they downloaded the QR code as required. But she was still caught off-guard while soaking in her first-ever view of Venice's canals.

On the other side of the entrance ways, workers in yellow vests carried out ran-

dom checks at the train station. Transgressors face fines of 50 to 300 euros (\$53 to \$320), but officials said "common sense" was being applied for the launch.

The requirement applies only for people arriving between 8:30 a.m. and 4 p.m. Outside of those hours, access is free and unchecked.

Venice has long suffered under the pressure of over-tourism, and officials hope that the pilot project can help provide more exact figures to better manage the phenomenon.

Venturini said the city is strained when the number of day-trippers reaches 30,000 to 40,000. On peak days, local police set up one-way traffic for pedestrians to keep the crowds moving.

Residents opposing the day-tripper tax insist that the solution to Venice's woes are to boost the resident population and the services they need,

limiting short-term rentals to make more housing available and attract families back from the mainland.

Last year, Venice passed a telling milestone when the number of tourist beds exceeded for the first time the number of official residents, which is now below 50,000 in the historic center with its picturesque canals.

Marina Rodino, who has lived in Venice for 30 years, doesn't see the fee as a cure-all. Neighboring apartments in her residential building near the famed Rialto Bridge once inhabited by families are now short-term apartment rentals.

"This is not a natural oasis. This is not a museum. It is not Pompeii. It is a city, where we need to fight so the houses are inhabited by families, and stores reopen. That is what would counter this wild tourism," Rodino said.

Man dies after being handcuffed, left facedown

Two Ohio officers on leave after restraining him.

By JOHN SEEWER and MARK SCOLFORO • Associated Press

TOLEDO, OHIO - An Ohio man who was handcuffed and left facedown on the floor of a social club last week died in police custody, and the officers involved have been placed on paid administrative leave.

Police body-camera footage released Wednesday shows a Canton, Ohio, police officer responding to a report of a crash and finding Frank Tyson, a 53-year-old East Canton resident, by the bar in a nearby American Veterans post.

The crash on April 18 had severed a utility pole. Officer Beau Schoenegge's body-camera footage shows that after a passing motorist directed police to the bar, a woman opened the door and said: "Please get him out of here, now."

Police grabbed Tyson, and he resisted being handcuffed and said repeatedly, "They're

trying to kill me" and "Call the sheriff," as he was taken to the floor.

They restrained him — including with a knee on his back — and he immediately told officers he could not breathe. A recent Associated Press investigation found those three words had been disregarded in other cases of deaths in police custody.

Officers told Tyson he was fine, to calm down and to stop fighting as he was facedown with his legs crossed on the carpeted floor. Police were joking with bystanders and leafing through Tyson's wallet before realizing he was in a medical crisis.

Five minutes after the body-camera footage recorded Tyson saying "I can't breathe," one officer asked another if Tyson had calmed down. The other replied, "He might be out."

Tyson, who was Black, telling officers he was unable to breathe echoes events preceding the death of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis police in 2020. Both Canton



This body-camera video image from Canton, Ohio, police shows Frank Tyson before he was arrested April 18 after he crashed his car into a utility pole. Tyson died after being handcuffed by police.

police traffic bureau officers who were placed on leave, Schoenegge and Camden Burch, are white, the Police Department said.

Tyson did not move when

an officer told him to stand. They shook him and checked for a pulse.

Minutes later, an officer said medics needed to "step it up" because Tyson was not

Canton Police Department via AP

responding and the officer was unsure if he could feel a pulse. Officers began CPR.

The Canton police report about Tyson's death that was issued Friday said that "shortly

after securing him," officers "recognized that Tyson had become unresponsive" and that CPR was performed. Doses of Narcan were also administered before medics arrived. Tyson was pronounced dead at a hospital less than an hour later.

His niece, Jasmine Tyson, spoke to WEWS-TV in Cleveland. "It just seemed like forever that they finally checked him," Jasmine Tyson said.

Frank Tyson was released from state prison on April 6 after serving 24 years on a kidnapping and theft case and was almost immediately declared a post-release control supervision violator for failing to report to a parole officer, the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction said.

The Ohio Attorney General's Bureau of Criminal Investigation said Thursday that its probe will not determine if force was justified and that the prosecuting attorney or a grand jury will decide if charges related to the use of force are warranted.

Moriarty requests outside legal counsel

► **PROSECUTOR** from A1 the high volume of other serious cases that are central to the safety of our community," the statement said.

In light of the news about Larson and Moriarty's request for outside legal counsel, Gov. Tim Walz's office said in a statement that it can't speak to Moriarty's reasons for doing so.

"But it raises questions about the approach she has taken in this case," the statement said. "The Governor will continue to monitor the case and has not closed the door to resigning it."

Moriarty's office said it's "disappointing" to see Walz "further injecting politics into a criminal legal matter, without picking up the phone to gather more information first." "The Governor knows well the extraordinary resources required for cases like this, including the prosecutions of Derek Chauvin and Jeronimo Yanez. This case should not be judged through limited information in the media, especially when we are unable to comment in detail on an active case."

Walz has not spoken personally with Moriarty about the case. He has maintained that he would only assign a case to Attorney General Keith Ellison if he requested it, and that hasn't happened.

Ellison's office said that representing Londregan and another trooper in the lawsuit filed by Cobb's family is a potential conflict of interest with the criminal case. "That's been his position and it is unchanged," spokesman John Stiles said.

When approached by a reporter earlier this week, Larson rebuffed questions about

his status with regard to the case. Sources familiar with the matter who requested anonymity say that Larson initially requested help with the prosecution, but that no other colleagues wanted to take part in the case.

Larson was a member of each team that successfully prosecuted ex-Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin in the killing of George Floyd, and ex-Brooklyn Center police officer Kimberly Potter in the killing of Daunte Wright. Ellison's office led prosecution of both cases.

As opposed to earlier documents, the most recent filing from Moriarty's office in the case is not signed by Larson. Instead, it's the signature of Chris Freeman, who is the co-head of the adult prosecution division. Larson is no longer included in ongoing communication between the office and Londregan's legal team.

Freeman previously prosecuted Cobb in a felony gun possession case in 2017.

Moriarty submitted a request this week to the Hennepin County Board for her office — rather than the county administrator — to maintain the authority to contract "outside counsel agreements and amendments for special criminal prosecution with the allocated budget of the Hennepin County Attorney's Office," according to a copy of the request.

She was at the board committee meeting Tuesday, but left to attend a news conference that she was hosting before the item came up on the agenda. The commissioners were then unable to ask her specifics about the request, including its purpose and timing.

Commissioners and staff

have not commented about the reasons for Moriarty's request.

Administrator David Hough said under the proposal Moriarty would have to notify commissioners when she hired outside counsel for criminal cases and report those costs twice a year. The county attorney would have to fund the hires out of her annual budget.

Hough also noted any outside attorneys working on criminal cases would have to abide by an outside-counsel policy that has been in place for decades. Commissioners have several questions they want Moriarty to answer before they make a decision at their next meeting Tuesday.

Commissioner Kevin Anderson wanted to make sure Moriarty would retain all authority over the cases that outside attorneys worked on.

"There needs to be accountability and transparency," Anderson said in a follow-up interview. "The public needs to know who is in charge of a case."

Commissioner Marion Greene wanted more information on past expenses for using outside lawyers.

"I'm not crazy about this, but I see its necessity," she said while the board was discussing the request. "I appreciate the inclusion of reporting requirements and want to see how it goes."

The county routinely uses outside lawyers for civil matters, but Hough noted that the county attorney is typically responsible for all criminal cases.

The Hennepin County Attorney's Office is the largest public law office in the state. The previous chief prosecutor, Mike Freeman, never hired

outside legal counsel from criminal prosecution in his 24-year tenure, although outside counsel was hired in cases referred to Ellison's office, such as the prosecution of Chauvin.

Londregan's legal team, state and federal lawmakers and the Minnesota Police and Peace Officers Association (MPPOA) have asked Walz to remove the case from Moriarty and reassign it to Ellison. "If a fair prosecutor takes over this case, it'll be dismissed. If Moriarty appoints one of her buddies, let's roll," Londregan defense attorney Chris Madel told the Star Tribune on Thursday.

MPPOA Executive Director Brian Peters said in a written statement to the Star Tribune that the case has been a "disaster" from the start.

"This latest news shows, once again, how this case should never have been charged. It's past time to reassign this case away from Moriarty to best serve a fair and honest judicial system — and not an unjust prosecution."

Word of Larson stepping down as lead prosecutor on the case has been circulating the courthouse in recent weeks, with the news reaching judges and defense attorneys who are not associated with the case.

Londregan appears in court Monday morning, when his attorneys will argue not enough probable cause exists to charge him with murder because his use of deadly force was justified, according to motions filed this week.

In response, Moriarty's office argued in its motion that a jury is tasked with deciding whether the killing is justified.

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NATION & WORLD



ANDY WONG • Associated Press

TO INFINITY AND BEYOND: Chinese astronauts, from left, Li Guangsu, Li Cong and Ye Guangfu depart Thursday for their manned space mission to the nation's orbiting space station. China is seeking to put astronauts on the moon by 2030.

UNITED STATES

Births fall to lowest level in four decades

The number of U.S. births fell last year to a little under 3.6 million babies, the lowest count in more than 40 years. That's about 76,000 fewer than in 2022, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said Thursday. Birthrates have long been falling for teenagers and younger women, but rising for women in their 30s and 40s. But last year, birthrates fell for all women younger than 40, and were flat for women in their 40s.

MARYLAND

First cargo ship passes through new channel

The first cargo ship passed through a newly opened deep-water channel in Baltimore on Thursday after being stuck in the harbor since the Francis Scott Key Bridge collapsed four weeks ago, halting most maritime traffic through the city's port. The Balsa 94, a bulk carrier sailing under a Panama flag, passed through the new 35-foot channel headed for St. John, Canada.

KENYA

Rainy season floods kill 38, displace 11,000

Devastating floods during Kenya's rainy season, aggravated by climate change, have killed at least 38 people and displaced about 11,000 people as rivers burst their banks and inundated low-income neighborhoods. Social media sites were awash Thursday with images and videos of people on rooftops of submerged houses. Residents across Nairobi neighborhoods used boats to rescue those stranded by the rising floodwaters.

OUTER SPACE

Voyager, on hold for months, finally pipes up

NASA has finally heard back from Voyager 1 again in a way that makes sense. The most distant spacecraft from Earth stopped sending back understandable data last November. NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Southern California declared success after receiving good engineering updates late last week. It takes 22½ hours to send a signal to Voyager 1, more than 15 billion miles away in interstellar space. Contact was never lost, rather it was like making a phone call where you can't hear the person on the other end, a JPL spokeswoman said Tuesday.

NEWS SERVICES

Suit details shorted pay, poor treatment at Minn. farm

► **LAWSUIT** from A1 and were regularly shorted by several hundred dollars."

In the vegetable fields, workers were not allowed to drink water or go to the restroom, while pesticides were sprayed "on or near" them, the suit contends. Workers were allowed to go to a local grocery store only once every 15 days, contrary to once a week, as stated in their initial employment agreements, the suit said.

The Svihel farm said it pays H-2A workers \$18.50 an hour with overtime rates of \$27.75 per hour. The company said it meets or exceeds federal and state requirements for the H-2A immigrant worker program. "We are proud of the working conditions, benefits and pay we provide."

The farm provides workers with communal housing at no cost. But in the suit, workers claim the living quarters in Foley and in Santiago, Minn., 12 miles away, had "worn, unclean mattresses, bedbugs, cramped

living spaces, extremely limited kitchen facilities and food storage, insufficient restroom facilities, and washers and dryers that required quarters to use."

Several workers claim the Svihel farm and its owner subjected them to exploitation, verbal and "psychological" abuse, anxiety, humiliation and various physical ailments.

One defendant who currently lives in Honduras claims Svihel threw a cabbage at him, striking him in the face. Another, who lives in Florida, alleges he urinated on himself when Svihel refused to stop while driving workers to the fields — and he was forced to work without a change of clothes.

The Svihel farm called such claims "clickbait language" that's part of a "false narrative" promoted by the workers' attorneys, who are looking for "a quick payday."

Two workers claim the farm retaliated against them for speaking to the U.S.

Department of Labor during its investigation of Svihel several years ago.

Svihel, his company and two labor brokers — one in Ohio and another in the Dominican Republic — were indicted in 2015 for conspiracy, allegedly requiring foreign workers in Minnesota to pay illegal fees and kickbacks. Charges included several counts of making false statements to the U.S. government.

The Ohio broker was convicted in federal court and handed a five-year prison sentence. Svihel and the Dominican broker each pleaded guilty in June 2016 to one count of conspiracy to commit fraud in foreign labor contracting; the other charges were dropped.

Svihel agreed to pay workers restitution of \$198,677 for kickbacks, \$532,822 for unpaid overtime wages and \$38,064 for unpaid wages generally. He also agreed to hire, with Labor Department approval, a monitor to oversee his farm's compliance with immigrant

worker laws through 2017.

The allegations against Svihel farm is the latest claim of immigrant worker abuse against a Minnesota agricultural enterprise.

In March, three South African workers sued a western Minnesota manure spreading company for labor violations, asking for back wages and damages. In January, Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison sued a Paynesville, Minn. dairy, claiming workers were forced to live in squalid conditions and were shorted \$3 million in wages.

In federal bankruptcy court last fall, Minnesota's Department of Labor and Industry accused HyLife, a Canadian pork company operating a plant in Windom, Minn., of illegally withholding tens of thousands of dollars in back wages from its largely immigrant workforce, including many short-term, agricultural visa holders.

Mike Hughlett • 612-673-7003

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NATION & WORLD

FCC votes to restore internet neutrality

Rules bar providers from slowing down websites.

By EVA DOU • Washington Post

The Federal Communications Commission voted 3 to 2 Thursday to put the internet back under “net neutrality” regulation, reprising Obama-era rules that prohibit service providers from discriminating against certain websites by throttling or blocking them.

But there’s a key detail that remains to be worked out: how to define the internet in 2024.

As a growing proportion of the modern physical world is intertwined with the internet, the question of precisely where it begins and ends has become murkier. FCC officials stopped short of defining the boundaries at a news conference after the vote, as they continue to study the issue. They affirmed that broadband providers will be prohibited from speeding up or slowing down content on the consumer internet — but will be allowed to run “fast lanes” for unspecified specialized services.

For “your home basic broadband,” FCC Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel said, “it is vitally important to us that that service is available without fast lanes and slow lanes.”

Adam Copeland, deputy chief of the FCC’s Wireline Competition Bureau, said Thursday that the FCC had amended the language of the guidance to make clear that speeding up content selectively on the consumer internet would be a violation of net neutrality, in addition to slowing down content — a clarification that consumer watchdog groups were calling for. Copeland said certain types of enterprise applications would be exempt from these rules.

Industry groups have been trying to figure out if this gives them room to sell new premium tiers of service, while consumer advocates warn that it might be used as a loophole.

The FCC has been seeking to find a middle ground where consumers’ interests are protected but companies still feel able to innovate. FCC spokesman Jonathan Uriarte said “the FCC will not allow ‘network slicing’ to be used as a get-out-of-jail-free card for net neutrality violations.”

The FCC first adopted net neutrality in 2015 after more than a decade of debate over the issue. It was repealed in 2018 under the Trump administration, which considered the rules too restrictive on businesses. The Biden administration has always signaled it intended to restore them, but it did not have a Democratic majority on the FCC until October.



Photos by RAMON ESPINOSA • Associated Press

Police stand guard outside the prime minister’s office in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, on Thursday after Ariel Henry resigned.

Haiti’s prime minister resigns

Move clears way for new government in country wracked by violence.

By DÁNICA COTO
Associated Press

PORT-AU-PRINCE, HAITI — Haiti opened a new political chapter Thursday with the installation of a transitional council tasked to pick a new prime minister and prepare for eventual presidential elections, in hopes of quelling spiraling gang violence that has killed thousands in the Caribbean country.

Ariel Henry, the prime minister who had been locked out of the country for the past couple of months due to the violence, cleared the way for the transition by presenting his resignation in a letter signed in Los Angeles.

The document was released Thursday in Haiti on the same day as the new transitional council was sworn in to choose a new prime minister and Cabinet. Henry’s outgoing Cabinet chose Economy and Finance Minister Michel Patrick Boisvert as interim prime minister in the meantime. It was not immediately clear when the transitional council would name its own choice for interim prime minister.

Addressing a crowded and sweaty room in the prime minister’s office, Boisvert said that Haiti’s crisis had gone on too long and that the country now found itself at a crossroads. The members of the transitional council stood behind him, and before him, the country’s top police and military officials as well as ambassadors and well-known politicians.

“After long months of debate ... a solution has been



Michel Patrick Boisvert, Haiti’s interim prime minister, during Thursday’s swearing-in ceremony of the transitional council in Port-au-Prince that will choose a new leader.

found,” Boisvert said. “Today is an important day in the life of our dear republic.”

He called the transitional council a “Haitian solution” and directing his remarks toward them, Boisvert wished them success, adding, “You are to lead the country to peace, to economic and social recovery, to sacred union, to participation.”

After the speeches, the soft clink of glasses echoed in the room as attendees served champagne flutes toasted with a somber “To Haiti.”

The council was installed earlier Thursday, more than a month after Caribbean leaders announced its creation following an emergency meeting to tackle Haiti’s spiraling crisis. Gunfire heard as the council was sworn in at the National Palace prompted worried looks.

Régine Abraham, a former World Bank and Haitian government official and a nonvoting member of the council, recalled the July 2021 assassination of President Jovenel Moïse. “That violence had a devastating impact,” he said.

Abraham said that gangs

now controlled most of Port-au-Prince, tens of thousands of the capital’s residents have been displaced by violence and more than 900 schools in the capital have been forced to close.

“The population of Port-au-Prince has literally been taken hostage,” she said.

Gangs launched coordinated attacks that began on Feb. 29 in the capital, Port-au-Prince, and surrounding areas. They burned police stations and hospitals, opened fire on the main international airport that has remained closed since early March and stormed Haiti’s two biggest prisons, releasing more than 4,000 inmates. Gangs also have severed access to Haiti’s biggest port.

The onslaught began while Henry was on an official visit to Kenya to push for a U.N.-backed deployment of a police force from the East African country.

In his resignation letter, Henry said Haiti would be reborn. “We served the nation in difficult times,” he wrote. “I sympathize with the losses and suffering endured by our compatriots during

this period.”

He remains locked out of the country.

“Port-au-Prince is now almost completely sealed off because of air, sea and land blockades,” Catherine Russell, UNICEF’s director, said earlier this week.

The international community has urged the council to prioritize Haiti’s widespread insecurity. Even before the attacks began, gangs already controlled 80% of Port-au-Prince. More than 2,500 people were killed or injured from January to March, up by more than 50% compared with the same period last year, according to a recent U.N. report.

“It is impossible to overstate the increase in gang activity across Port-au-Prince and beyond, the deterioration of the human rights situation and the deepening of the humanitarian crisis,” María Isabel Salvador, the U.N. special envoy for Haiti, said at a U.N. Security Council meeting on Monday.

Nearly 100,000 people have fled the capital in search of safer cities and towns since the attacks began.

On Thursday, some Haitians said they didn’t know that the country had a new prime minister and a transitional council in place. Others warily celebrated the new leadership.

“We don’t ask for much. We just want to move about freely,” said Guismet Obabour, owner of a dusty convenience store who lamented that his merchandise has been stuck at the port for two months.

As for Boisvert: “I don’t know him personally, but as long as he does what he’s supposed to do, provide security to the country, that’s all that matters.”

Ukraine seeks to replenish its forces

Restrictions are placed on men of conscription age.

By JILL LAWLESS and ILLIA NOVIKOV • Associated Press

KYIV, UKRAINE — Even as Ukraine works to get much-needed arms from a huge U.S. aid package to the front line, its government is seeking to reverse the drain of its potential soldiers, announcing that men of conscription age will no longer be able to renew passports from outside Ukraine.

The Cabinet of Ministers said late Wednesday that men between 18 and 60 years old who are deemed fit for military service will only be able to replace their passports inside Ukraine.

Millions of Ukrainians have fled the country since Russia’s full-scale invasion in 2022, mostly to neighboring European countries. The European Union’s statistics agency, Eurostat, says 4.3 million Ukrainians are living in E.U. countries, 860,000 of them men 18 years of age or older.

The defense minister of Poland, home to one of the biggest Ukrainian diasporas, said the country was ready to help “in ensuring that those who are subject to compulsory military service go to Ukraine,” though he did not specify how.

“Ukrainian citizens have obligations towards the state,” Wladyslaw Kosiniak-Kamysz said.

The move has met with some criticism inside Ukraine. Opposition lawmaker Ivanna Klymush-Tsyntsadze, who heads the Parliamentary Committee for Ukraine’s European Integration, said denying military-age men access to consular services could lead to “well-founded” legal challenges at the European Court of Human Rights.

“I think that these actions will only push an enormous number of Ukrainians to look for different ways to obtain citizenship from other countries,” she said.

Russia’s population of almost 150 million dwarfs Ukraine’s 38 million, and Moscow can draw on a much bigger army. Earlier this month, Ukraine lowered the conscription age from 27 to 25 in an effort to bolster the size of its military.

The U.S. is sending \$61 billion in new military aid, a lifeline for Kyiv’s armed forces in their more than two-year war with Russia. President Joe Biden signed into law the aid package on Wednesday.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has said “the key now is speed” in getting the supplies into place.

U.S. to withdraw 75 Special Forces troops from Chad

By ERIC SCHMITT
New York Times

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon will withdraw dozens of Special Operations forces from Chad in the next few days, the second major blow in a week to U.S. security and counterterrorism policy in a volatile swath of West and Central Africa, U.S. officials said Thursday.

The decision to pull out about 75 Army Special Forces personnel working in Ndjamena, Chad’s capital, comes days after the Biden administration said it would withdraw more than 1,000 U.S. military personnel from Niger in the coming months.

The Pentagon is being forced to draw down troops in response to the African governments’ demands to renegotiate the rules and conditions under

which U.S. military personnel can operate. Both countries want terms that better favor their interests, analysts say. The decision to withdraw from Niger is final, but U.S. officials said they hoped to resume talks on security cooperation after elections in Chad on May 6.

The departure of U.S. military advisers in both countries comes as Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso are turning away from years of cooperation with the United States and forming partnerships with Russia — or at least exploring closer security ties with Moscow.

The Kremlin uses persuasion — and other times, coercion — to achieve its aims. The United States warned Chad’s president last year that Russian mercenaries were plotting to kill him and three senior aides and that Moscow was backing Chadian rebels



BRYAN DENTON • New York Times file

U.S. officials say they’re being forced by African governments to withdraw troops. Some countries are turning away from years of cooperation with the U.S. and turning to Russia instead.

massing in the Central African Republic, to the south. At the same time, the Kremlin was courting sympathizers within Chad’s ruling elite, including Cabinet ministers and a half

brother of the president.

The impending departure of the U.S. military advisers from Chad, a desert nation at the crossroads of the continent, was prompted by a letter from

the Chadian government this month that the United States saw as threatening to end an important security agreement with Washington.

The letter was sent to the American defense attache and did not directly order the U.S. military to leave Chad, but it did single out a Special Operations task force that operates from a Chadian military base in the capital and serves as an important hub for coordinating U.S. military training and advising missions in the region.

About 75 Green Berets from the 20th Special Forces Group, a National Guard unit from Alabama, serve in the task force. A handful of other U.S. military personnel work in the embassy or in different advisory jobs and are not affected by the decision to withdraw, officials said.

The letter blindsided and puzzled U.S. diplomats and military officers. It was sent from Chad’s chief of air staff, Idriss Amine; typed in French, one of Chad’s official languages; and written on Amine’s official letterhead, two U.S. officials said. It was not sent through official diplomatic channels, they said, which would be the typical method of handling such issues.

Current and former U.S. officials said the letter, which was reported earlier by CNN, could be a negotiating tactic by some members of the military and the government to pressure Washington into a more favorable deal before the elections in May.

U.S. troops are scheduled to begin leaving this weekend and complete their departure to Germany by May 1, two U.S. officials said.

Scandalous stories squelched

Tabloid publisher says he agreed to scheme to not hurt Trump campaign.

By JONAH E. BROMWICH and BEN PROTESS and MICHAEL ROTHFELD • New York Times

NEW YORK — Days before Donald Trump became president in early 2017, a handful of advisers, officials and allies descended on his office at Trump Tower: the FBI director, a future secretary of state, his soon-to-be chief of staff — and the publisher of the National Enquirer.

The publisher, David Pecker, may have seemed out of place, but he had just performed an indispensable and confidential service to the Trump campaign: He had paid off a Playboy model, Karen McDougal, who said she had an affair with Trump, and a doorman who had heard that Trump had fathered a child out of wedlock. The future president, triumphant, thanked Pecker for his service.

That remarkable scene was private until Thursday, when Pecker recounted it to jurors in Trump's Manhattan criminal trial. He described in vivid detail how Trump laid bare their effort to buy and bury damaging stories that could have derailed Trump's campaign — a plot at the center

of the case.

"He said, 'I want to thank you for handling the McDougal situation,' and then he also said, 'I wanted to thank you for the doorman situation,'" Pecker testified Thursday. "He was thanking me for buying them and for not publishing any of the stories and helping the way I did. He said that the stories could be very embarrassing."

Trump also asked about McDougal: "How's our girl?" Pecker said he replied, "She's cool. She's very quiet. No issues."

Pecker's testimony was a stunning moment in the first criminal trial of an American president. Coming on his third day on the stand, it underscored how Pecker's support in 2016 has now come back to haunt Trump in 2024.

Pecker, who delivered hours of testimony Thursday, described how he had helped quash three scandalous stories about Trump, including by setting in motion a hush-money deal with a pornographic movie actor, Stormy Daniels. That payment is central to the prosecution's case against Trump, and Pecker's testimony illuminated the deal to a captivated jury.

The payment came about after Pecker relayed Daniels' story to Trump's lawyer and fixer at the time, Michael



SPENCER PLATT • Pool photo via AP
Ex-President Donald Trump outside the Manhattan court on Thursday during his criminal trial on hush-money payments.

Cohen, and urged him to pay her off. Cohen ultimately did, to the tune of \$130,000.

Pecker's testimony, which kept many jurors rapt as Trump shifted and slumped in his chair, spoke to a central theme in the prosecution's case. Pecker, prosecutors contend, joined a three-man conspiracy with Trump and Cohen, hatching a plot to hide damaging stories from the American people.

Pecker introduced the jury to the practice known as "catch and kill" — buying the rights to a story with no intention of publishing it — a dark art in the world of supermarket tabloids. The National Enquirer used the tactic to silence McDou-

gal and the doorman.

He took jurors behind the scenes of the shady deal-making, detailing how he had bought McDougal's story for \$150,000 and disguised the payment as a deal for other services, including writing columns. Those supposed services, he acknowledged, were camouflage for an illegal donation to Trump's campaign.

In a powerful moment for the prosecution, Pecker acknowledged a clear-cut motive for keeping the model's story under wraps: protecting Trump's chance of winning the White House.

"We didn't want the story to embarrass Mr. Trump or

embarrass or hurt the campaign," Pecker testified.

He also acknowledged that it is unlawful for a corporation to spend money that way to influence the election, another pivotal moment in the early days of the trial.

Pecker explained to the jury that he had learned Daniels was looking to sell her story as Trump's campaign was reeling from the publication of an "Access Hollywood" recording, in which Trump boasted of grabbing women by their genitals.

That tape, he said, "was very embarrassing, very damaging to the campaign."

At one point, Trump and Pecker spoke directly about the deal with McDougal, the former publisher testified. Trump, he said, called McDougal "a nice girl," leading Pecker to believe that the candidate "knew who she was."

After Trump's victory, Pecker encountered him at the Trump Tower meeting in January 2017 and then in July of that year at the White House.

"Mr. Trump asked me to join him in the walk from the Oval Office to the dining area," Pecker recalled, and on the walk, Trump posed a question: "How is Karen doing?"

Pecker replied: "She's doing well. She's quiet. Everything's going good."

N.Y. court overturns Weinstein conviction

← **WEINSTEIN** from A1 based on legal technicalities and not an exoneration of Weinstein's behavior, saying the original trial irrevocably moved the cultural needle on attitudes about sexual assault.

The Manhattan District Attorney's Office said it intends to retry Weinstein. At least one of his accusers said through her lawyer that she would testify again.

The state Court of Appeals overturned Weinstein's 23-year sentence in a 4-3 decision, saying "the trial court erroneously admitted testimony of uncharged, alleged prior sexual acts" and permitted questions about Weinstein's "bad behavior" if he had testified. It called this "highly prejudicial" and "an abuse of judicial discretion."

In a stinging dissent, Judge Madeline Singas wrote that the Court of Appeals was continuing a "disturbing trend of overturning juries' guilty verdicts in cases involving sexual violence." She said the ruling came at "the expense and safety of women."

In another dissent, Judge Anthony Cannataro wrote that the decision was "endangering decades of progress in this incredibly complex and nuanced area of law" regarding sex crimes after centuries of "deeply patriarchal and misogynistic legal tradition."

The reversal of Weinstein's conviction is the second major MeToo setback in the last two years. The U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear an appeal of a Pennsylvania court decision to throw out Bill Cosby's sexual assault conviction.

Weinstein has been in a New York prison since his conviction for forcibly performing oral sex on a TV and film production assistant in 2006, and rape in the third degree for an attack on an aspiring actor in 2013. He was acquitted on the most serious charges — two counts of predatory sexual assault and first-degree rape.

He was sentenced to 16 years in prison in the Los Angeles case.

Weinstein's lawyers said they expect the ruling on Thursday to have a major effect on the appeal of his Los Angeles rape conviction. Their arguments are due May 20.

Jennifer Bonjean, a Weinstein attorney, said the California prosecution also relied on evidence of uncharged conduct alleged against him.

Weinstein lawyer Arthur Aidala called the Court of Appeals ruling "a tremendous victory for every criminal defendant in the state of New York."

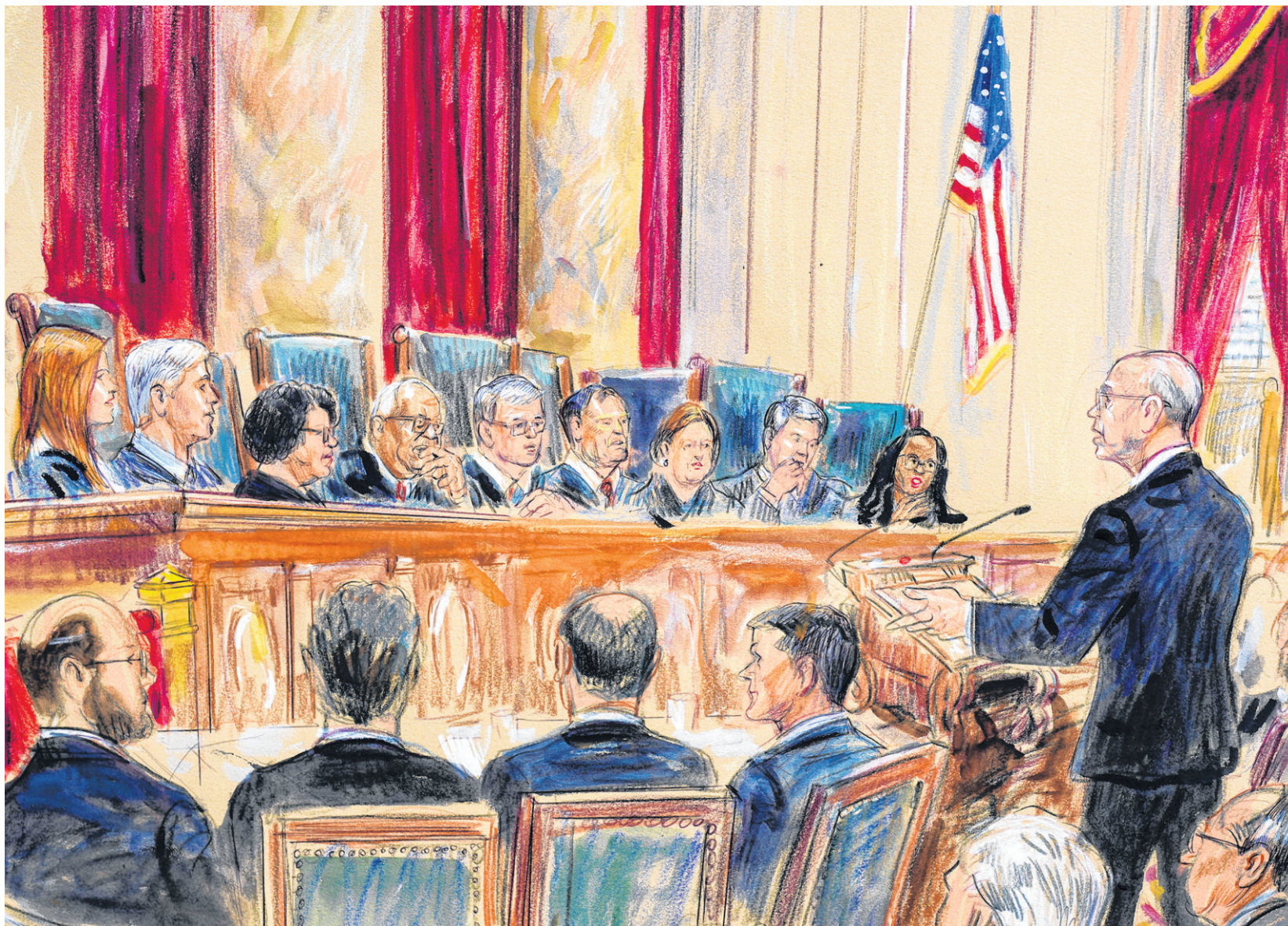
Attorney Douglas Wigdor, who has represented eight Harvey Weinstein accusers including two witnesses at the New York criminal trial, called it "a major step back" and contrary to routine rulings by judges allowing evidence of uncharged acts to help jurors understand the intent or patterns of a defendant's criminal behavior.

Prominent civil rights and MeToo attorney Debra Katz, who represented several Weinstein accusers, said her clients are "feeling gutted" by the ruling, but she believes — and is telling them — that their testimony had changed the world.

"People continue to come forward, people continue to support other victims who've reported sexual assault and violence, and I truly believe there's no going back from that," Katz said. She predicted Weinstein will be convicted at a retrial and said accusers like her client Dawn Dunning feel great comfort knowing he will remain behind bars.

Dunning, a former actor who was a supporting witness at the New York trial, said in remarks conveyed through Katz that she was "shocked" by the ruling and dealing with a range of emotions, including asking herself, "Was it all for naught?"

"It took two years of my life," Dunning said. "I had to live through it every day. But would I do it again? Yes."



Dana Verkouteren via AP
This sketch depicts Michael Dreeben, lawyer for special counsel Jack Smith, as he argues against presidential immunity before the Supreme Court on Thursday.

Private vs. official conduct is at issue

← **SUPREME COURT** from A1 a way to provide more narrow protections for a president's core constitutional duties, with some of the conservative justices especially concerned about hampering the power of future presidents.

In contrast, the court's three liberal justices emphasized that a president is not above the law. They seemed to reject the idea of immunity from prosecution, expressing fears about giving a president unbounded power to commit crimes from the White House.

Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson asked Trump's lawyer about the prospect of turning the Oval Office into "the seat of criminal activity in this country."

"If the potential for criminal liability is taken off the table," she asked, "wouldn't there be a significant risk that future presidents would be emboldened to commit crimes with abandon while they're in office?"

Most of the justices — and even the lawyers on opposite sides in the case — seemed to agree that a former president can be prosecuted for private

conduct while in office.

"There does seem to be some common ground between you and your colleague on the other side that no man is above the law and that the president can be prosecuted after he leaves office for his private conduct. Is that right?" Gorsuch asked Trump lawyer John Sauer, who agreed.

No lower court has determined whether the allegations in Trump's indictment amount to official acts that could be shielded from liability or private conduct. But when the Supreme Court agreed to take the case, it rephrased the question it would consider as: "whether and if so to what extent does a former president enjoy presidential immunity from criminal prosecution for conduct alleged to involve official acts during his tenure in office."

That means the high court's ruling is likely to require lower courts to separate out Trump's official acts from his private ones, as alleged in the indictment, before proceedings can restart in the election obstruction case. If the D.C. trial is stalled until after the

election, and Trump returns to office, he could pressure his attorney general to drop the federal charges against him.

Special counsel Jack Smith, who sat in the courtroom on Thursday to hear the arguments, has charged Trump with four felonies. The former president is accused of using false claims of massive voter fraud to pressure state officials, the Justice Department and former Vice President Mike Pence to change the election results; scheming with others to submit to Congress slates of phony electors from swing states and get lawmakers to toss out lawful ballots; and encouraging supporters to gather on Jan. 6, 2021, at the Capitol, where a violent mob stopped the vote count for many hours.

In a key exchange during oral argument, Justice Amy Coney Barrett read aloud from detailed allegations in the special counsel's indictment and got Sauer to concede that many of the alleged acts amount to private conduct that would not be shielded from prosecution.

Even if the court decides

there is some level of immunity for a president's official acts, Barrett noted, the special counsel has told the court that there is enough evidence of Trump's private conduct to go to trial. She asked Michael Dreeben, the special counsel's lawyer, if the trial could proceed based solely on the alleged private acts in the interest of "speed and wanting to move forward."

In a foreshadowing of potential additional legal wrangling in the lower courts, there was sharp disagreement between the parties about what in the indictment amounts to official conduct.

Justice Elena Kagan at one point wondered whether a former president could escape prosecution even if he ordered a coup or sold nuclear secrets. Sauer said prosecutions might not be allowed if those were determined to be official acts.

"That sure sounds bad, doesn't it?" Kagan asked.

Some of the conservatives repeatedly tried to steer the discussion away from the specifics of Trump's indictment, instead focusing on concerns about politically motivated

prosecutions that they said could undercut democracy in the future.

Justice Clarence Thomas — whose wife, Virginia "Ginni" Thomas, was involved in the efforts to overturn the 2020 election — asked whether a president could be prosecuted for orchestrating a coup. (Democrats called on Thomas to recuse himself from the case because of his wife's involvement but he did not.)

The justices were reviewing a unanimous ruling from a three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit, which forcefully said Trump could be prosecuted for his alleged efforts to stay in power after he lost the 2020 election to Joe Biden. Their decision to hear the case on the last day of the high court's argument calendar — rather than let the appeals court ruling stand — has drawn criticism from Trump's critics, who say the American public should know the outcome of the prosecution before voting in November.

This story contains material from the Associated Press.

Editorials

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Turn off cellphones in state's classrooms

We see it everywhere — adults and young people with heads lowered and eyes trained on hand-held screens. But that should not be the case when Minnesota's K-12 students are in school and in class. Their learning environment should be a phone-free zone that allows them to focus on listening to and interacting with their teachers and classmates.

More than 95% of teenagers have access to cellphones, according to Pew Research Center, and more than half of them say it would be somewhat difficult for them to give up social media.

Kids won't usually go without that connection on their own, making it critical for schools to step in with guidelines. That's why state legislation that would require schools to have cellphone policies should be approved.

Administrators at St. Anthony and Maple Grove middle schools told the Star Tribune that they've observed positive changes in students and the school environment after making their schools cellphone-free. One

reported that behavioral problems involving negative social media posts are down dramatically; the other administrator said students are no longer involved in disputes with teachers over phone use.

Rep. Sandra Feist, DFL-New Brighton, sponsored a smart bill that would require Minnesota schools to adopt cellphone possession and use policies for students.

Legislation that would require schools to have smartphone policies is a good foundation.

The state would not tell schools what those rules should be — just require that they have policies in place by March 2025.

Minnesota school administrator groups would collaborate to make best practices available to schools to help them draft rules that minimize the negative impact of cellphones on student behavior, mental health and academic achievement.

"I'm a mom of middle schoolers and have been concerned about this issue for some time," Feist told an editorial writer. "When we look at the data and understand that this is disruptive, our bill provides schools with a bit more cover to strengthen cellphone policies." She added that research shows that students are more anxious and less attentive and have more behavioral issues at school when they have constant access to their phones.

"This is about the overall well-being of our kids," Feist said, adding that she believes an "off and out of sight" phone policy is ideal. But for now, she said, lawmakers can start with requiring a policy at all and providing resources to help schools.

Feist has worked with state Rep. Kristin Robbins, R-Maple Grove, who shared the research of psychologist Jonathan Haidt with superintendents in her district. We agree with Haidt's conclusion that children should have phone-free schools so that they can learn, cultivate friendships and develop into mentally healthy young adults.

It's worth noting that that some Minnesota districts have had pushback from parents or guardians who feel they should have access to their kids via cellphone 24/7. Yet in cases of emergency, students can be easily reached by calling the school. And special guidelines could be factored in if mobile phones are needed for a physical or mental health issue.

As the Star Tribune Editorial Board has previously argued, banning technology from classrooms altogether isn't necessary or realistic. School-issued tablets, laptops and desktop computers are essential tools for some academic work. But cellphones are another story.

Minnesota students should focus on learning while in class — not texting friends or keeping up with the latest posts on Instagram or TikTok.

OTHER VIEWS

ISRAEL/HAMAS WAR

How many hostages are still alive? Don't ask Hamas.

Iran's attack on Israel and the failed attempt by GOP backbenchers to scuttle a foreign aid package have dominated recent news on the Middle East. But such reports overshadow an ominous development in the Jewish state's fight against terror: Hamas officials don't know how many of the hostages they seized during the barbaric Oct. 7 attack that started the current war remain alive.

This bit of information slipped out last month during talks between Israel and Hamas over a proposed cessation of hostilities. International negotiators have pressured Israel to agree to a six-week cease-fire and to release hundreds of Palestinians convicted of various crimes by the nation's courts. In return, Hamas would free 40 hostages — primarily, women, the sick and the elderly.

That hardly amounts to an even deal. The cease-fire would allow the terror group to rearm and reconfigure itself to continue its quest of Israel's destruction another day. The "prisoner" exchange is heavily lopsided in favor of the terrorists. But it appears Hamas would be unable to meet even those meager obligations.

Earlier this month, an Israeli official told the New York Times his nation had been told "that Hamas did not have 40 living hostages in Gaza who met the criteria for an exchange." The news "raised fears," the Times reported, "that more

hostages might be dead than previously believed."

The Times notes that Israeli officials believe about 130 captives remain in Gaza, "and Israeli intelligence officers have concluded that at least 30 of those have died in captivity." Six American citizens remain captive — if they're still alive.

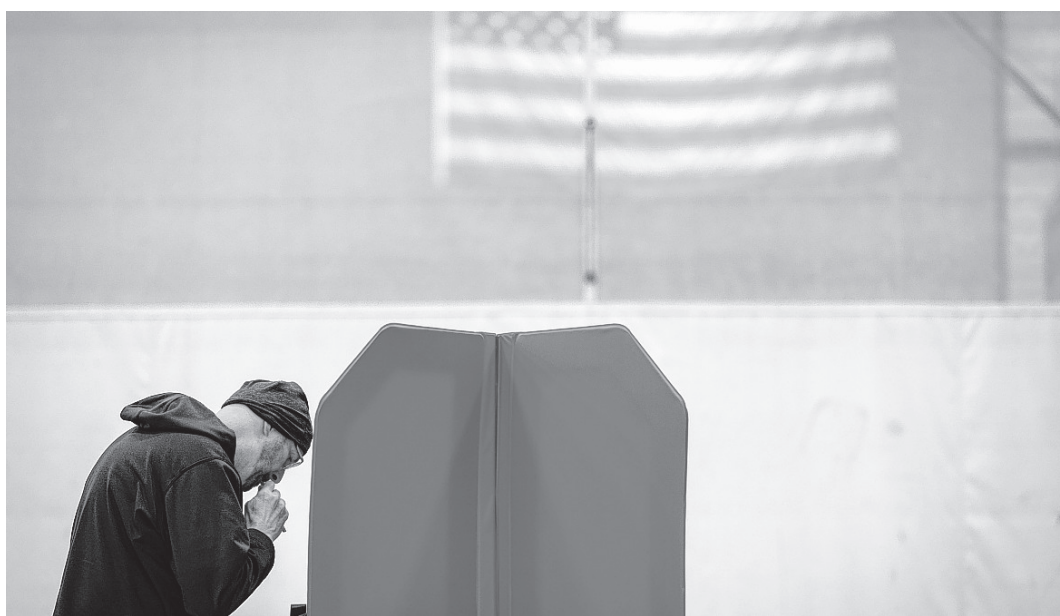
Hamas terrorists kidnapped 253 civilian men, women and children during their murderous rampage six months ago. A brief cease-fire in December led to the release of 105 prisoners, and the Israeli Defense Forces have rescued three hostages. Hamas released four more unilaterally.

During a March interview with the BBC, a Hamas official said the group has "asked for a cease-fire to collect that data" on which hostages are alive and where, the Jerusalem Post reported. The official added that information on the hostages was "valuable" and could not be given "for free."

This is what deluded Hamas sympathizers defend. A group purporting to be a legitimate government authority that seeks permanent war against Israel, engages in indiscriminate slaughter, intentionally kidnaps innocent civilians to use as leverage and purposely puts its own people in harm's way to create propaganda opportunities. And critics of Israel dare accuse the nation of "war crimes"? That's willfully blind and absurd even for a college campus.

FROM AN EDITORIAL IN THE LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL

Readers Write



LEILA NAVIDI • leila.navid@startribune.com

A voter marks a ballot during Minnesota's presidential primary in Andover on March 5.

CAUCUS SYSTEM

These meetings aren't to blame

Self-described "longtime Republican activist" Annette Meeks, bemoaning the increased partisanship and general deterioration of our political system, has plenty of company ("Get rid of precinct caucuses, go to primary elections up and down the ballot," Opinion Exchange, April 24). Polls suggest that most Americans dread the coming presidential election contest between two very unpopular candidates. It will get ugly here; if I lived in a "swing state" I might have to burn my television. But bizarrely, Meeks tries to blame precinct caucuses, dominated, she claims, by extremists.

I've been attending precinct caucuses for almost 60 years, and while I've seen an occasional extremist or two, they've always been in the minority at the caucuses I've attended. Plus, Minnesota is one of only nine states using a caucus system, not merely enough clout to determine the presidential candidates. Clearly, the problem lies elsewhere. When Donald Trump ran for president in 2016, millions of Americans, including prominent Republicans like John McCain, Paul Ryan, Mitt Romney, Dick Cheney, Mitch McConnell, Lindsey Graham, etc., expressed alarm. But in the end, most Republican leaders decided that their personal careers were more important than their values, and either caved to Trump or slid meekly out of sight; and have been replaced by people that Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush would not have taken seriously. And this, not caucuses, are why Republicans can't win a statewide election in Minnesota. The Democrats, unfortunately, are scarcely better. I think Gov. Tim Walz has done a decent job overall, but I was furious when he told Rep. Dean Phillips to "stay in [his] lane." Phillips has dropped out, and it seems unlikely that Robert F. Kennedy Jr. or Jessie Ventura is going to win.

The root of our problem is the duopoly of our two-party system. If this fall's election fiasco results in the collapse of both the Republican and Democratic parties, we'll all be better off down the road.

JOHN K. TREPP, Minneapolis

...

In her recent commentary, Meeks is correct that precinct caucuses are a major contributor to angry political division. But she doesn't go far enough. In the caucus system, much less than 10% of citizens often decide who the rest of the voters can vote for. That's not democracy. But we should scrap not only precinct caucuses for statewide and local elections, but also jettison primaries. Like caucuses, primaries also result in a small subset of voters deciding who the rest of us can vote for.

A better system would be a general election with multiple qualified candidates in which voters can rank them according to their preference. Qualification requirements might include a minimum number of signatures to get on the ballot, for example. A broader range of candidates and a vote ranking system would mean that every voter would impact who is elected, not just a select few. Political parties could still endorse, of course. And qualified candidates on the general ballot could self-describe the party they "belong to." But let's engage the electorate. Let's give them tools to participate. Voter participation will increase. Candidates will have to listen to all citizens, not just the polarizing litmus-test edges of left or right. So, let's scrap both caucuses and primaries, and give elections and our democracy back to our citizens.

ALAN ARTHUR, Wayzata

...

Meeks' essay derogating the Minnesota political caucus system fails on three counts.

First, Meeks conflates the perceived authority of caucuses with the endorsement power of political conventions. However "hyperpartisan" (her word) caucus attendees may be as a group, they remain individuals with free will to vote as they deem appropriate during the subsequent political conventions, where candidates have the opportunity to make their cases and contend for party endorsements.

Secondly, Meeks insists caucuses and political primary elections are and must be mutually exclusive for the political parties to effectively represent the public will. To the contrary, Minnesota's layered system, including caucuses, endorsing conventions and primaries, provides arguably the best of each system, with our primary elections either confirming or overruling the endorsements of the respective political conventions.

Finally, Meeks complains that the DFL has elected two governors and an attorney general without convention endorsement in the past 14 years, while Minnesota Republicans have failed to select any winning statewide officials since 2006. It appears that Meeks' true intent, in proposing to eliminate the political caucus system, is to find a way to rehabilitate the moribund Republican Party of Minnesota.

PETER HILL, Minnetonka

...

I hardly could disagree more with Meeks' commentary on Minnesota elections.

First of all, candidates (such as I once was) come and go, but issues are always here for discussion, hopefully in a civil atmosphere. While participation in caucuses, alias town meetings, has decreased, this largely is due to the manner in which politics in this country has developed into prioritizing party ideology over national/international concerns. "Politics," incidentally, derives from the Greek "politikos" and refers to being involved in the larger community reaching beyond one's self. Thus, peaceful, meaningful grassroots engagement is to be promoted to help connect members of the community.

It behooves us to understand from where Meeks is coming. She was the deputy chief of staff for Newt Gingrich. Also, her organization, the Freedom Foundation of Minnesota, is conducting a misguided and misinformed opposition to ranked-choice voting in our state.

RICHARD LAYBOURN, Bloomington

The writer was a Citizens Party candidate for Congress in the Third District.

STATE SEN. NICOLE MITCHELL

Ethics suddenly matter to the GOP

There is a high degree of irony in Minnesota Senate Republicans' current efforts to push for the expulsion of DFL Sen. Nicole Mitchell after her recent arrest ("Session upended by state senator's arrest," April 25). While Mitchell's actions are concerning, Republicans are set to nominate as their candidate for president a man who has been charged with dozens of felonies in the past year. Given this context, it's hard to see Senate Republicans' action as anything more than a partisan effort to weaken the DFL's political power.

SAM BENSON, Minneapolis

PRESIDENTIAL RACE

I've had it with Dems. RFK it is.

Why am I ending my support for the Democratic Party? When compared to all the other ills of the world, there is none worse than war. War is hell. It is the ultimate evil that must be avoided. Take for example one snapshot into the lives of the people of Gaza. Yet, my Democratic U.S. representatives continue to fund war against Palestine, against Russia and a ramping up of war tensions with China.

I believe in protecting the environment, upholding women's reproductive rights and funding public education. But I will tolerate any backsliding in progress in those areas rather than continue to vote for a party that has become the party of war. A party that doesn't unequivocally stand against war and doesn't advocate for peace is not a moral authority and cannot be trusted to govern. Like Martin Luther King Jr., I condemn "any organizer of war, regardless of his rank or nationality." Given the choice between the party of war or the party of Donald Trump, the party of Trump is the lesser evil. However, my vote will go to the candidate who is willing to take on the military-industrial complex, Robert F. Kennedy Jr. That's a vote against a duopoly that repeatedly tears apart countries (Iraq, Afghanistan, Vietnam, etc.) for its own profits and global dominance.

MARK ROBINSON, St. Paul

YOUR VIEWS?

We welcome your participation in these pages, whether in letters for the "Readers Write" section or commentaries for the "Opinion Exchange" page.

The best way to contribute is through the "Submit a letter or commentary" link on our website, at startribune.com/opinion. You can also submit by email to opinion@startribune.com.

Submissions must be exclusive to us in Minnesota. All must include the writer's real, legal name, address, occupation and phone numbers. Letters and rebuttals become the property of the Star Tribune and may be republished in any format. Letters should be brief, up to 250 words. Articles should be fewer than 700 words. Because of the volume of submissions, we cannot respond to all writers.

Opinion Exchange

Commentaries are selected to present a range of perspectives and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Star Tribune Editorial Board.

HEALTH CARE

The best direction for gender care after Cass Review

Clinical care should be guided by neither legislation nor ideology; it should be guided by evidence.

By VIRGINIA DALE

Earlier this month, Dr. Hilary Cass submitted a report and recommendations to NHS England, of a systematic review of gender services offered by that country's National Health Service and of the evidence base for gender-affirming care. Cass is a respected pediatrician, who, among other roles, served as president of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health from 2012 to 2015.

NHS England commissioned Cass to make recommendations on how to improve NHS gender identity services and ensure that children and young people who are experiencing gender distress receive a high standard of care that meets their needs, and is safe, holistic and effective.

A systematic review is one that uses explicitly defined methods to search for and appraise the quality of published research data and to synthesize the results of studies which meet established quality standards. The study enlisted the help of a Research Ethics Committee and commissioned a Centre for Reviews and Dissemination for the systematic review of the literature and a systematic appraisal of international guidelines used in gender care. The review also included carefully designed stakeholder engagement and interviewed or listened to more than 1,000 patients, family members and providers.

A summary of the findings of the Cass Review, as well as a link to the full report, can be found at tinyurl.com/cass-final.

The report took four years to complete and is 388 pages in length. It is interesting reading, but if you are pressed for time, it will be more expedient to consider this response from the editor-in-chief of the British Medical Journal: "The evidence base for interventions in gender medicine is threadbare, whichever research question you wish to consider — from social transition to hormone treatment." Editors of medical journals do not often use words like "threadbare."

Questions about the evidence base for gender-affirming care are not new. The Cass Review represents the fourth European country to conduct a review and to restrict the use of puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones.

The medical establishment in the U.S. is an increasingly distant outlier in this area. Last August, under pressure, the American Academy of Pediatrics initiated its own systematic review of the evidence, but at the same time, restated its commitment to gender-affirming care. It will be an unusual systematic review if it finds an evidence base for this position.

Most major medical associations in the U.S., as well as the state of Minnesota itself, support the model of treatment of gender-distressed



GLEN STUBBE • Star Tribune

Gov. Tim Walz displays the "trans refuge" bill after he signed it into law on April 27, 2023, in St. Paul. It was the first of three progressive priorities of the session: a ban on conversion therapy for minors and vulnerable adults and two bills that would make Minnesota a refuge for people traveling here for abortion and gender-affirming care.

young people known as gender-affirming care. Per the Minnesota Department of Health, these treatments "have to do with changing secondary sexual characteristics like voice pitch, absence/presence of breast tissue, body hair, and body fat distribution, or delaying these changes from occurring using puberty blockers." MDH states that these treatments help to alleviate gender dysphoria and improve mental well-being by aligning a person's physical characteristics with their gender identity, and that this approach is supported by scientific evidence.

The Cass Review finds otherwise. The NHS will no longer simply refer young people to gender clinics, but will implement a distributed service model to provide treatment in a holistic way — in other words, treatment that is not guided by gender specialists, and that will use standard, evidence-based psychological and psychopharmacological approaches. From the report: "For most young people, a medical pathway will not be the best way to manage their gender-related distress." The use of puberty blockers will be limited to research settings.

The concept of gender identity is central to the model of gender-affirming care and to related prohibitions on conversion therapy. The idea is that people are born with a "gender identity" that only they can know, the enactment of which results in living an authentic life. This echoes the politically successful narrative around homosexuality, and supports the idea that conversion therapy is harmful and ineffective.

However, gender identity is a philosophical

concept. It may be a good model for describing some patients, but it does not explain the surge in young people seeking care for gender distress. The current population is a strikingly different group from those treated in the original studies. It is increasingly clear that the causes of gender distress are diverse and are not easily explained by the concept of being "born that way."

Since around 2014, many countries have noted a dramatic rise in youth experiencing gender distress, a change of age of onset from early childhood to adolescence, a reversal of biologic sex from predominantly male to predominantly female, an increase in a nonbinary identity, and an increase in co-occurring mental and psychosocial needs prominently including depression, anxiety, body dysmorphic disorder, autism spectrum disorder and adverse childhood experiences. A high incidence of same-sex attraction has characterized the patient population since the beginning.

These young people bring a host of complex needs, not easily summarized by the concept of gender identity. Unfortunately, this may reflect an increase in mental health challenges and emotional distress among the broader adolescent population, which has risen among boys and girls, but more among girls and young women, and is thought to be fueled by a complex set of factors, including factors which have been collectively described as "social contagion."

The Cass Review included a systematic review of 19 international, national and regional guidelines. Notably, most of the guidelines themselves noted insufficient evidence about

the risks and benefits of medical treatment of adolescents, but, despite this, they cited this same evidence in their strong treatment recommendations. They also frequently cited one another. From Cass: "The circularity of this approach may explain why there has been an apparent consensus on key areas of practice despite the evidence being poor."

Few of the guidelines reviewed recommended formal measures or clinical tools to diagnose gender dysphoria, and the formal measures which were observed were found to be poorly validated. Per the report: "A formal diagnosis of gender dysphoria is ... not reliably predictive of whether that young person will have longstanding gender incongruence in the future, or whether medical intervention will be the best option for them. Depending on what has caused their distress or dysphoria, it may be resolved by medical treatment, but it may also be resolved in other ways."

In short, the evidence base for gender-affirming care is not what is claimed by either activists or by those who write guidelines, including prominent U.S. professional medical associations. The philosophical concept of "gender identity" is not an effective model for understanding the natural history of gender dysphoria.

Legislation is not a good way to create medical guidelines. Neither the prohibition nor the support of gender-affirming care through legislative action is wise. Unfortunately, U.S. professional medical associations failed in their leadership role by taking partisan rather than evidence-based positions, in a betrayal of their duty to patients and families and of their trusted role. This has only added to the divisiveness of this issue. Their leadership could have dampened the move toward legislative prohibitions in red states and provided better guidance to those in government who are concerned about gender-distressed young people. Clinical care should be guided by neither legislation nor by ideology; it should be guided by evidence.

Our state has an explicit position of support for gender-affirming care, and a corresponding prohibition on conversion therapy, which can have a dampening effect on the provision of other modalities of treatment. I call upon Gov. Tim Walz and our legislative leaders to reevaluate this stance, and to begin the hard work of establishing guidelines for a high standard of care that is safe, holistic and effective, such as the one that the Cass report outlines for the NHS.

Virginia Dale, of Minneapolis, is a physician. For additional commentary about the Cass Review, see "The courage to follow the evidence on transgender care," by New York Times columnist David Brooks, published by Star Tribune Opinion online on April 19 (tinyurl.com/brooks-cass).

THE HEALTH OF OUR CITIES

The tale of two cities' assessed property values

Why Minneapolis appears less healthy than St. Paul, and what lies ahead.

By STEVE BRANDT

Star Tribune reporters recently informed readers about the disparity between Minneapolis and St. Paul residential property assessments ("Downtown St. Paul property values down, residential values up," April 17). In Minneapolis, the residential tax base dipped 1.3%. In St. Paul, every neighborhood's median-value home rose in value, except downtown, rising anywhere from 1.2% in Payne-Phalen to almost 6% in West Seventh.

At first glance, the contrast seems to paint a picture of a faltering Minneapolis market, while St. Paul ranges from slight to more robust growth. I suggest the picture is more complex, but still worrisome.

The factors that prompted the decline in Minneapolis values were the same as those in St. Paul: a shrinking pool of listings and especially high interest rates, at least by recent standards. So why did Minneapolis fare worse?

The slump in Minneapolis home values was felt particularly hard in some of the city's higher-priced wards. The tonier lakes-area Ward 7, with a \$390,000 median value, fared the worst among the city's political subdivisions, with a drop of 8.8% in the median home value. The southwestern Ward 13, which boasts the highest median home value at \$518,000, dropped by almost 1%. My assessment elsewhere in southwest dropped 5%.

In contrast, just two wards, both



Star Tribune

"In Minneapolis, the residential tax base dipped 1.3%. In St. Paul, every neighborhood's median-value home rose in value, except downtown, rising anywhere from 1.2% in Payne-Phalen to almost 6% in West Seventh," Steve Brandt writes.

on the North Side, recorded the only gains in the city in median home value. Ward 4, with the lowest median home value at \$226,000, saw values rise by more than 2%. Next-door Ward 4, with the next lowest median value, rose by 0.7%.

St. Paul's citywide median home value increase of 2.95% was hardly much to get excited about, but it did go up. But St. Paul's median value of \$272,200 is much less than the Minneapolis median of \$323,000. And that's why the two cities differed.

Lower-value homes held their values better because there's more buyer demand for more affordable houses, especially when higher interest rates put monthly payments for higher-value homes out of the reach for more buyers. (As an aside, those of us who took out mortgages in the mid-1970s at 8.5% — even higher than today's run-up — considered ourselves lucky a few years later when mortgage rates shot up to 12%.)

No doubt, Minneapolis is in for some tough sledding. All three legs

JACK OHMAN TRIBUNE CONTENT AGENCY



of the city's tax base still shrunk. Besides the residential dip, the aggregate market value of the city's apartments dropped by 9.5%, excluding new construction. Fortunately, that new construction, much of it stimulated by the city's 2040 Plan, roughly offset that shrinkage. Meanwhile the commercial tax base shrunk by 8.7% or over a billion dollars. That's largely driven by the black hole of downtown commercial real estate, where the tax base plunged 13%.

How long will these conditions persist? The residential and apartment markets seem likely to rebound once the Federal Reserve starts trimming interest rates. Indeed, more recent realtor data than the Septem-

ber cutoff for the assessor's analysis seems to show that the Minneapolis residential market has regained healthy growth. But the downtown commercial trough, here and in other big cities, seems likely to persist for several years.

All this data adds up to a tax shift toward homeowners in 2025. Indeed, their share of the city's tax capacity has increased by four percentage points since the pandemic's onset. Some of this may be offset by the state's increases in the home-stead market value exclusion but we won't know by how much until we get our 2025 tax bills. When the assessor's office presented details of the shrunken tax base to the Minneapo-

lis Board of Estimate and Taxation in March, Mayor Jacob Frey warned that the outlook foreshadows significant consequences for residential taxpayers. The city's five-year budget plan calls for a 6.1% increase in property tax collections next year. That benchmark needs intense scrutiny from Frey and the City Council, who govern city spending, and the Board of Estimate, which sets the tax ceiling. It's also time to consider what can be done to diversify the city's revenue sources.

Our taxpayers deserve that much.

Steve Brandt is an elected member of the Minneapolis Board of Estimate and Taxation. He is a retired Star Tribune reporter.

MIDEAST

New Gaza pier is perilous work in progress

U.S. plans to use new port, deliver aid by early May

By LOLITA C. BALDOR, JULIA FRANKEL and JON GAMBRELL
Associated Press

JERUSALEM — The construction of a new port in Gaza and an accompanying U.S. military-built pier offshore are underway, but the complex plan to bring more desperately needed food to Palestinian civilians is still mired in fears over security and how the humanitarian aid will be delivered.

The Israeli-developed port, for example, has already been attacked by mortar fire, sending high-ranking U.N. officials scrambling for shelter this week, and there is still no solid decision on when the aid deliveries will actually begin.

While satellite photos show major port construction along the shore near Gaza City, aid groups are making it clear that they have broad concerns about their safety and reservations about how Israeli forces

will handle security.

Sonali Korde, an official with the U.S. Agency for International Development, said key agreements for security and handling the aid deliveries are still being negotiated. Those include how Israeli forces will operate in Gaza to ensure that aid workers are not harmed.

“We need to see steps implemented. And the humanitarian community and IDF (Israeli Defense Forces) continue to talk and engage and iterate and improve the system so that everyone feels safe and secure in this very difficult operating environment,” Korde said.

A senior U.S. military official said Thursday the U.S. is on track to begin delivering aid using the new port and pier by early May. The official, who spoke to reporters on condition of anonymity to discuss details not yet made public, said deliveries through the sea route initially will total about 90 trucks a day and could quickly increase to about 150 trucks daily.



ALYSSA SCHUKAR • New York Times

AID WORKERS REMEMBERED: The seven World Central Kitchen aid workers killed by Israeli airstrikes risked everything “to feed people they did not know and will never meet,” celebrity chef and organization founder José Andrés told mourners who gathered Thursday to honor them in Washington, D.C.

The senior official acknowledged, however, that the final installation of the U.S.-built causeway onto the beach at the port will be governed by the security situation, which is assessed daily. The Israeli Defense Force has a brigade

— thousands of soldiers — as well as ships and aircraft dedicated to protecting the deliveries, the official said.

Asked about the recent mortar attack, the military official said the U.S. assesses that it had nothing to do with the

humanitarian mission, adding that security around the port will be “far more robust” when the deliveries start.

In addition, the U.S. has rehearsed offensive and defensive measures to ensure U.S. troops working at the pier and those on the floating platform several miles off shore are all protected.

Aid groups have been shaken by the deaths of seven World Central Kitchen aid workers in an Israeli airstrike on April 1 as they traveled in clearly marked vehicles on a delivery mission authorized by Israel. The killings have hardened sentiment among some aid groups that the international community should focus instead on pushing Israel to ease obstacles to the delivery of aid on land routes by truck.

The World Central Kitchen staff, who were honored at a memorial service Thursday in Washington, are among more than 200 humanitarian workers killed in Gaza, a toll the U.N. says is three times higher

than any previous number for aid workers in a single year of any war.

Development of the port and pier comes as Israel faces widespread international criticism over the slow trickle of aid into the Palestinian territory, where the United Nations says at least a quarter of the population sits on the brink of starvation.

A U.N. official said the port will likely have three zones — one controlled by the Israelis where aid from the pier is dropped off, another where the aid will be transferred, and a third where Palestinian drivers contracted by the U.N. will wait to pick up the aid before bringing it to distribution points.

The construction of the new port in the Gaza Strip appears to have been moving quickly over the last two weeks, according to satellite images analyzed Thursday by the Associated Press. Offshore, U.S. Navy and Army vessels have started the construction of the large pier, or floating platform.



ANTHONY SOUFFLÉ • anthony.souffle@startribune.com

Nine people were arrested for allegedly trespassing during pro-Palestinian protests this week at the University of Minnesota. Student Mirabai Dornfest holds a sign during a Tuesday rally.



SHARI L. GROSS • shari.gross@startribune.com

In November, University of Minnesota senior Isabel Lundquist taped up flyers of those kidnapped by Hamas on Oct. 7. Reports of antisemitism have been on the rise ever since the attack.

‘AN ARENA OF PUBLIC DISCOURSE’

◀ **UNIVERSITY** from A1 less disruptive, though nine people were arrested for allegedly trespassing at the U earlier this week. And the issue hovers over many aspects of university life.

“These are really fraught times,” Macalester College President Suzanne Rivera said.

The past six months have corresponded with what the U.S. Department of Education has described as an “alarming nationwide rise” in complaints of antisemitism and Islamophobia since Oct. 7. On that day, Hamas launched a surprise attack on Israel that killed an estimated 1,200 people and resulted in hundreds being taken hostage. Israel responded by invading the Gaza Strip, where the Palestinian death toll has now surpassed 34,000, according to statistics released by the United Nations.

College leaders find themselves facing renewed pressure to protect free speech rights while ensuring students’ safety — and lamenting that two values they have long held dear are increasingly being pitted against each other.

“Most people will tell you they believe in the importance of free speech and that they believe free expression is important on college campuses, right up until they hear a word they don’t like,” Rivera said. “And then, at that point, it seems like there is an urge to expect presidents and other leaders to step in and limit free expression.”

An open forum?

Leaders at Macalester College say this is a moment to teach students how to make a difference in a messy world. They’ve hosted events aimed at reducing the rancor in political discourse and invited offi-

cialists from different parties to come debate hotly contested issues.

Interim University of Minnesota President Jeff Ettinger has received requests to block speakers from coming to campus, remove faculty members’ statements on the conflict or quash protests.

“To me, as the months have gone by, it has reinforced in my mind the notion that a campus needs to try to be an arena of public discourse and try to avoid being one of the participants in it,” he said, emphasizing that college should be an open forum.

Bias complaints at the U have more than doubled, with 122 reports filed so far this year. Of those, 42 “reported bias against Israel/antisemitism,” while 16 “reported bias against Palestine/Islamophobia,” Ettinger said the university has boosted security when appropriate.

The U is also working to create a policy that aims to better outline when and how faculty can issue statements on high-profile issues. Members of at least four U departments issued statements on the war, some supporting Israelis and some supporting Palestinians. Some were referenced in a complaint asking the U.S. Department of Education to investigate concerns about antisemitism. One drew a rebuke from Republican state lawmakers who noted they would consider the U’s response while vetting funding requests.

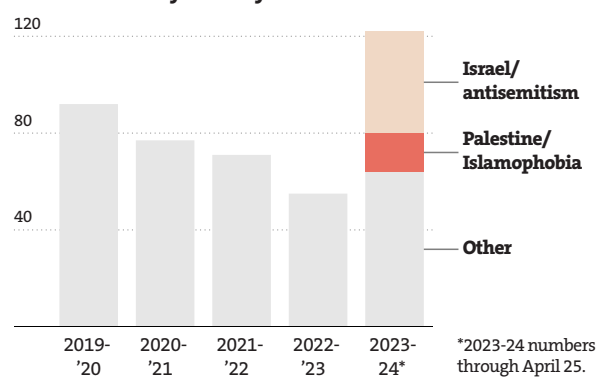
In the meantime, U faculty are approaching the conflict differently. Some have joined pro-Palestinian rallies and sent letters reaffirming students’ right to protest. Others have avoided discussing the war.

Bruno Chaouat, an antisemitism scholar who teaches

BIAS REPORTS RISE AT THE U

Complaints of antisemitism and Islamophobia have risen at college campuses across the United States since the Israeli-Hamas war began. At the University of Minnesota, bias complaints have more than doubled compared to last school year.

Bias incidents by school year



MARK BOSWELL • Star Tribune

USC cancels graduation amid protests, arrests

The University of Southern California canceled its main graduation ceremony Thursday and dozens more college students were arrested at other campuses nationwide as protests against the Israel-Hamas war continued to spread.

A tent encampment popped up at Indiana University Bloomington before police with shields and batons shoved into a line of protesters, arresting an unknown number.

At the City College of New York, hundreds of students who were gathered on the lawn beneath the Harlem campus’ famed gothic buildings erupted in cheers after a small contingent of police officers retreated from the scene.

Students protesting the war are demanding schools cut financial ties to Israel and divest from companies enabling the conflict. Some Jewish students say protests have veered into antisemitism and made them afraid to go on campus.

USC announced the cancellation of the May 10 graduation ceremony a day after more than 90 protesters were arrested on campus. The university said it will still host dozens of commencement events.

Los Angeles police said 93 people were arrested Wednesday night during a campus protest for allegedly trespassing. One person was arrested on allegations of assault with a deadly weapon.

At Emerson College in Boston, 108 people were arrested overnight at an alleyway encampment.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

about the Holocaust, avoids discussing Oct. 7 in class but will talk about it during office hours. That’s partly an effort to stay closely on topic, but Chaouat also said, “I was overwhelmed by the event and frankly didn’t have words.”

“The Holocaust has become extremely difficult to teach,” said Chaouat, who previously ran the U’s Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies. “It is relativized, and there is a trend toward accusing the Jews of monopolizing suffering and victim status.”

A search for peace

A pro-Palestinian rally on the U campus earlier this week drew hundreds of people, enough to cover the lawn outside Coffman Memorial Union. Many people approached by the Star Tribune said they didn’t want to talk. Some said they feared retaliation.

Wazwaz suspects many also worry about a scenario where “the whole movement becomes misinterpreted as antisemitism” and harms the effort to get help to the 1.7 million people in Gaza.

She was born in Jerusalem and regularly sees videos from the war-ravaged areas.

“You’ll see people crying for help,” she said, adding that some of the killed are aid workers trying to provide people with food or medical care. She worries that in some of the debates over protests, some are losing track of the fact this violence is “costing people’s lives.”

Rally organizers have called on the U to divest from companies supporting Israel, ban defense recruiters on campus, and issue statements supporting Palestinian students. Some also lamented the nine arrests earlier this week. Ettinger said the university has a policy pro-

hibiting encampments and aims to ensure it’s enforced neutrally, for all groups.

At the rallies, some speakers said they believed protesters of color were being unfairly targeted and were receiving fewer protections than their Jewish colleagues on campus. People participated in group chants calling for a cease-fire, describing the violence in Gaza as genocide and accusing Israel of promoting terrorism.

Graduate student Imogen Page, a member of Jewish Voice for Peace Twin Cities, has attended some of the pro-Palestinian protests.

“We know that we have a moral obligation to do everything in our power to stop our government from supporting this,” Page said.

Page helped coordinate a Seder meal at the U protest site earlier this week.

“The way they participated was so moving,” said Page, who noted this was the first time many had experienced the meal celebrating the deliverance of the ancient Hebrews from slavery in Egypt.

Greenspan, who is trying to revive a chapter of Students Supporting Israel, spent the first half of the week trying to balance his final classes of the semester with Seder meals held elsewhere. It’s been a long few months full of unnerving protests. At one point, he and some others spotted a poster where someone had crossed out the Star of David.

He worries some of their messages are getting lost.

“I think there is a confusion when pro-Israel people come out and there’s the idea that the Zionists or the pro-Israel people, we want this war to continue,” he said. “We just want peace.”

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