

# DAILY SITKA SENTINEL

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6 Pages

## Override Vote Saves Hike in School BSA

By JAMES BROOKS and CORINNE SMITH  
Alaska Beacon

Alaska's public schools may see the largest permanent funding boost in well over a decade, after the Alaska Legislature voted for the first time since 2002 to override a sitting governor's veto.

With a 46-14 vote, lawmakers significantly increased Alaska's per-student public funding formula, overriding Gov. Mike Dunleavy's decision to reject House Bill 57. Forty votes were needed for an override.

"This was a truly bipartisan vote reflective of everyone in Alaska," said Speaker of the House Bryce Edgmon, I-Dillingham.

While the new law changes state policy on school funding, whether Alaska schools actually see an increase for the coming school year depends on the outcome of the budget process.

It was the third time in two years that the governor vetoed a significant education funding bill; lawmakers failed by a single vote to override the governor last year. A second veto earlier this year was sustained

by a larger margin.

Senate President Gary Stevens, R-Kodiak, said, "I had heard that we would be at 46, and that was just perfect. ... I sort of hoped there wouldn't be a lot of discussion. There wasn't any. Everyone knew how they wanted to vote."

The override means a permanent increase of \$700 in the base student allocation, core of the state's per-student funding formula.

That's a small year-over-year increase for public schools, which received bonus funding last year equivalent to a \$680 BSA increase.

Critically, that money wasn't approved until late in the budget process, which meant school districts had to budget for less money, then restore programs and rehire teachers once the money was approved.

Adding money to the base level would reduce that back-and-forth.

In addition, the bill changes the charter school application process, directs school districts to develop policies to restrict students' cellphone use, creates a grant program designed to

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### Hats Off

Sitka High School graduates throw their mortarboards in the air after receiving their degrees Monday night in the school gymnasium. The gym was standing-room-only for the ceremony that saw 72 seniors graduate. Guest speaker for the evening was Stacy Golden, Sitka High sci-

ence teacher. Following the commencement graduates were driven in a parade over the O'Connell Bridge, a Covid-era tradition that has been maintained. Photos of the event are on the Sentinel website, sitkasentinel.com. (Sentinel Photo by James Poulson)

## AMSEA Cuts Can Keep Fishermen on the Dock

GARLAND KENNEDY  
Sentinel Staff Writer

Funding cuts to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has put lifesaving safety classes for commercial fishermen in jeopardy, says Leann Cyr, executive director of the Alaska Marine Safety Education Association.

AMSEA receives funding from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, which lost most of its staff in cuts to the Department of Health and Human Services under HHS Secretary Robert Kennedy Jr.

"When you're talking about funding cuts in particular, what we're looking at is a couple grant programs under NIOSH for commercial fishing safety. Because the employees were fired and they're just not there, the program can't be administered. It wasn't cut, it's just that it can't function," Cyr told the Sentinel on Monday.

The cuts to NIOSH took effect in April and May, but the Trump administration has moved to rehire workers vital to the safety of coal miners and firefighters.

AMSEA, a grant-funded nonprofit, is based in Sitka but conducts maritime safety courses across Alaska and in other states. Before Trump, the budget was about \$750,000, and there were plans to go for a \$1 million grant, Cyr

said.

Starting July 1, "if nothing changes, we're not going to have funding for any commercial fishing safety program that we offer in Alaska," she said.

"They essentially got rid of NIOSH altogether. That doesn't just affect commercial fishing safety, but it affects a lot of other industries, like coal miners and firefighters, loggers, and these are really dangerous industries. NIOSH is the only agency who protects those workers," Cyr said.

AMSEA receives congressionally authorized federal funds, as well as a smaller amount — about \$185,000 this year — from the state, which is used for general boating safety and recreational boating classes.

Alaska Sen. Lisa Murkowski stated her concerns at a May 14 meeting of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions.

While a number of NIOSH workers were rehired after their firing, "employees that received (reduction in force) notices for the program were not rescinded in the NIOSH Center for Marine Safety and Health Studies," Murkowski informed Sec. Kennedy a week ago. "So this is a big deal for our commercial fishing safety. It could effectively leave our fishing fleet out of compliance with Coast Guard safety

regs. So we're watching that very, very carefully."

Kennedy replied: "You're talking about the NIOSH program, you should talk to me about that. And as you know that's something I'm deeply concerned with, commercial fisheries."

"Most fishermen are required to take the emergency drill conductor training, and if they can't take that training, they could be stuck at the dock," Cyr said.

"This time of year, we get calls all the time to AMSEA saying, 'Hey, I need the training right now, because I went to get my exam and they said I needed this training.' And that happens all over the country," she said.

While funding for drill conductor classes runs out July 1 in Alaska, AMSEA will run out of money for national classes on September 1.

The classes, which have run for decades, are proven lifesavers. Commercial fishing is the second most dangerous profession in the country, the Bureau of Labor Statistics says, behind only timber, and Cyr noted that fishing fatalities plummeted after NIOSH instituted maritime safety programs.

"Fishermen need the training to be

able to survive. And there's been an 80 percent decrease in fatalities from (the establishment of these NIOSH programs) until now. There's still almost just as many vessel disasters and falls overboard; those are the two leading causes of death for fishermen nationally," she noted. The difference is that crew members now survive those incidents.

The drill conductor class teaches fishermen how to deploy safety gear such as life rafts and survival suits, as well as how to place and use EPIRBs to ensure the successful rescue of a crew during a crisis.

In the opening days of the Trump administration in January and February, Cyr said, AMSEA's grant funding was frozen, and there was also a halt in communications from HHS leading up to the mass firing of employees.

AMSEA exists to provide commercial fishermen with the resources needed to stay safe on the water, and have the proper training required to fish at all.

"It's pretty much why we were started. It's great to do the recreational boating — we're trying to expand that — but this is why we came into existence, was to fill that particular (commercial fishing) need. So it would be not acceptable for us to lose the commercial fishing safety program," Cyr said, "because who else is going to do it, and who else is going to fund

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## Himschoot, Stedman Say Funds Still at Risk

SHANNON HAUGLAND  
Sentinel Staff Writer

Sitka's legislators say today's override of Gov. Dunleavy's veto marks progress in securing a permanent funding increase for schools, but still leaves school districts uncertain about their budgets for the fiscal year starting July 1.

"Hopefully as we work through our process here, the \$700 (increase in per student funding) will be included, but there's no guaranteeing," Sen. Bert Stedman said shortly after casting a "yes" vote to override the governor's veto. "I think the schools need to be cautious on their budgets and use some number less than that."

Both Stedman, co-chair of Senate Finance, and Rep. Rebecca Himschoot, co-chair of House Education Committee, voted with the majority in the Legislature's successful effort to override the veto.

Himschoot said it's the first time in the seven years that Dunleavy has been governor that the Legislature has summoned the 40 votes needed to override his veto, and she was pleased with the message this conveys.

"Today the Legislature stood up for students, families and Alaska's future," said Himschoot, an independent who represents District 2. "It's an historic day but still leaves school boards



Rep. Rebecca Himschoot is seen at the Capitol Tuesday. (Photo by James Brooks/Alaska Beacon)

## Voter Turnout Averages 150 In Early Voting

SHANNON HAUGLAND  
Sentinel Staff Writer

Early voting has been brisk for the May 28 special election on a proposition to limit local cruise ship visitation, the city clerk reported Monday.

The number of voters going to the polls since early voting started May 13 has ranged from 83 to 206 per day, with an average of 150 per day, Sara Peterson said.

"It's quite a large turnout for early voting, so folks are engaged, which is nice to see," she said.

Early voting runs from May 13 through May 27 at Harrigan Centennial Hall. Hours are 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 9 a.m. to noon on Saturday. Voting is closed for Memorial Day, Monday, May 26.

On the day of the special election Wednesday, May 28, polls are open 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. in rooms 5 and 6 for Pre-

cinct 1, and Rooms 2 and 3 for Precinct 2.

Turnout was highest during the week, with the lowest turnout day being Saturday, when polls were open for three hours.

Ballots cast in early voting will be counted after polls close on election night, along with the ballots cast on election day. Absentee ballots will be counted on Monday, June 2, at Centennial Hall.

Proposition 1 was put on the ballot through the citizens initiative process by members of the group Small Town Soul. The question asks whether voters want to adopt Ordinance No. 2024-33 to regulate all cruise ship visitation, beginning with the 2026 cruise season.

The proposed ordinance includes regulations to cap the number of scheduled passengers to 300,000 per season and 4,500 per day; limit port calls to May 1 through Sept. 30; restrict port calls to up to six days a week ensuring at least one day per week with no large ship.

Other provisions in the proposed ordinance are for the city to implement and administer a scheduling and permitting system for large and small ships; for operators to report visitation data to the city; and for the city to enforce the ordinance (fines, suspending permits).

Other ways to vote include by absentee ballots by mail, by fax or electronic transmission, by personal representative and absentee voting. The deadline for requesting an absentee ballot by mail is 5 p.m. May 21; and the deadline for submitting an application to vote by email is 5 p.m. May 28.

Those with questions may email clerk@cityofsitka.org.

## Park Restroom Gets Replacement

CATHY LI  
Sentinel Staff Writer

The recently demolished Crescent Harbor restroom, located in the 700 block of Lincoln Street near the Seawalk, will be replaced by the end of June, Project Manager Jason Hudson said.

The City and Borough of Sitka is working with McG Constructors of Sitka, whose bid was about \$329,000 for the project. The total cost to the city may increase after additional water and electrical work.

The new bathroom is a prefabricated module, and Hudson said the installation team will add some "artistic flair," such as a decorative truss and matching its color palette to other buildings in the area.

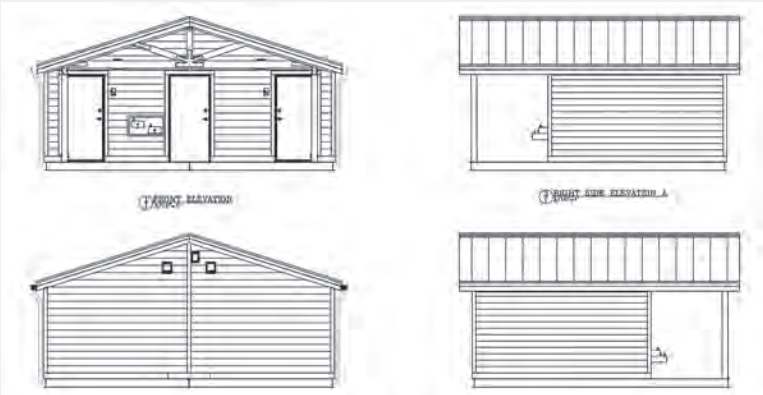
The availability of toilets at Harrigan Centennial Hall should help mitigate the inconvenience to visitors while the restroom is under construction, Hudson said.

The structure that was taken down on May 3 was built in the 1970s, and "anyone walking past it could see that it was in need of some love," Hudson said.

The siding was falling off, paint was chipping and insulation was becoming visible. It would have been more labor-intensive to refurbish all these features than to replace the structure altogether, he said.



The old Crescent Park restroom is pictured in February. It was razed earlier this month. (Sentinel File Photo by James Poulson)



A drawing shows the new Crescent Park prefabricated restroom, to be installed by the end of June. (Image provided by Jason Hudson)



### NEXT SHIP

**Wednesday, May 21**  
Passengers  
4363 (capacity)

**NG Sea Lion**  
Petro Marine

**Eurodam**  
Sitka Cruise Terminal  
8am – 4pm

**Quantum of the Seas**  
Sitka Cruise Terminal  
9:30am – 5pm

**NOTE: All info based on data available at press time. Subject to change.**

**The Daily Sentinel will not publish Monday, May 26 in observance of Memorial Day**

**The deadline for news releases and advertising items for the Tuesday, May 27 edition is 3 p.m. Friday, May 23**



Letters to the Editor

Thank You, Old Harbor

**Dear Editor:** Please allow me to take this opportunity to publicly acknowledge a local business that has been quietly providing Sitkans with a wonderful service for at least two decades.

Old Harbor Books has been delivering books to the Sitka Jail free of charge for as long as I can remember. Obviously, a jail is a secure and restrictive environment designed to keep contraband out. For security and sanitation reasons, books and magazines are highly restricted.

Thankfully for our citizens, Old Harbor books allows people serving time in the Sitka Jail to order new books, and will then deliver the books to the jail securely and discreetly. Old Harbor has been a trusted service provider to the Sitka Jail for many years and we are grateful for their continued service.

Dave Nelson  
Sitka Police Department

Voting No on 1

**Dear Editor:** As a financial professional and someone with historical knowledge of sales taxation in Sitka, I want to offer my perspective that an analysis of readily available hard historical data from the City and Borough of Sitka shows that, even with inflation factored in and construction sales factored out, a compelling argument can be made that the explosion in retail sales and sales of services have accounted for the large increase in sales tax collections since the COVID 19 pandemic. Accordingly, a very strong argument can be made that sales and services to the cruise industry is the driving factor behind this inflation-adjusted large increase.

Detailed sales and sales tax collection can be found in City and Borough of Sitka's 2024 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report. The report is can be accessed through the City and Borough's website by going to the Finance Department's page on the website and clicking on the link there. In the report, sales and sales tax collection data by industry/business segment is found on page 118.

The city's sales tax data shows overall sales growing from \$436 million in FY21 to \$810 million in FY24, an increase of \$374 million or 85% over the three-year period. Adjusted for estimated inflation, the increase would still be \$282 million or 65% over the three-year period. The data shows a big increase in construction sales, but – IMPORTANTLY – an almost negligible increase in corresponding sales taxes collected on those construction sales.

What is clear to me is that, when inflation is factored into the data and construction is factored out, there is a clear and compelling increase in retail sales and the sales of services! The inflation-adjusted data without construction shows that overall sales grew by \$79.3 million. So, with inflation factored in and construction factored out, I ask what – exactly – accounts for this \$80 million growth in sales in Sitka? What other segment of our local economy has expanded, besides tourism, to account for this growth? We always had independent tourism here, even before the pandemic, and independent tourism is limited by the availability of lodging.

It is also important to understand what a significant reduction in taxable sales and subsequent reduction in sales

Sitka Yesterday

20 YEARS AGO  
May 2005

Photo caption: A plaque proclaiming Sheldon Jackson College campus a National Historic Landmark is unveiled by SJC trustees Richard Scheumann, at left, and Monte Wilson National Park Service Alaska Region regional director Victory Knox, in front of Allen Auditorium. Knox said the school is the oldest educational institution in the state.

50 YEARS AGO  
May 1975

Precipitation was .15 inch below normal for Sitka in April, Sitka Observatory reports. In all, 5.20 inches of rain and snow fell, and Sitka is now .17 inch below normal. The highest temperature was a 55 reading on April 25, and the lowest was a 25 on April 4.

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tax collections means to Sitka. Based on my experience as CBS Finance Director, reductions in sales tax revenue almost always result in postponements or eliminations of general governmental repair and maintenance capital projects, especially street repair. Push coming to shove, capital projects have always been paired back before reductions in school funding or staff reductions in the city workforce.

Shrinking our local economy will diminish overall prosperity for all. We need to grow our economy, utilizing what opportunities are afforded us. This is why I will vote No on Proposition 1.

Jay Sweeney, Sitka

Vote Yes on Prop 1

**Dear Editor:** Today, I took a walk from my home on Maksoutoff Street to vote. I saw a couple looking a bit lost so I asked if I could help them find what they might be looking for.

They said they were trying find where lighter boats picked up passengers. I pointed out where to go for one under the bridge. They told me they visited Sitka a few years back so had seen lot of Sitka's sights at that time. They had planned to do little shopping. They then said Sitka is now too crowded, so they are going go back to their ship. Everywhere they went here, they had to stand in line. They said that is bad enough on the ships.

They also said they won't be back unless Sitka cuts down on visitor traffic. They asked about signs they've seen in town about Proposition 1. I told them Proposition 1 are efforts to thin down the number of ships coming on the same days. Today there were five ships.

They said they just hope Sitka has the sense to vote Yes on it! It is hard to disagree with what these cruise visitors said, which is: Vote Yes on Prop 1!

Kim Elliot,  
Sitka resident since 1959

Cruise Ship Waste

**Dear Editor:** Cruise ships bring money to our town but also discard waste into our waters. As of 2019, there is no funding from the State of Alaska to monitor these wastewater discharges.

The Sentinel article of May 7 about the debate on this issue, included a statement reading in part that the "Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation"... showed "recent cruise ship wastewater violations involving excessive discharges of pollutants like ammonia, copper, chlorine and fecal coliform."

A letter to the editor in the Sentinel dated May 15, 2025, by Devon Calvin gave specifics that certainly made me stop and think once again about the limits of what nature can absorb and still thrive. In that letter he made the statement: "On each cruise, a 3,600-passenger ship will generate about 55 million gallons of acidic scrubber wastewater – equal to 84 Olympic-sized swimming pools." That is just the engine waste. Calvin also stated: "On a seven-day journey, a ship of this size dumps 211,000 gallons of treated sewage and 1.7 million gallons of gray water.

Some are allowed to dump treated sewage in Alaska waters, even at port; others are required to dump outside three miles."

With no monitoring, ignoring requirements is easy. The requirements don't even seem strict enough to protect the environment. This is a problem that needs to be addressed whether there is 1 or 6 cruise ships in our waters.

However our community decides to vote, I would ask that those with the most say in this industry will consider the future of our waters and all of us. Don't let the extra dollars now, cause you to ignore your responsibility for the futures of everyone and the beauty of this place. Please, please include the future in your decisions for the present.

Beth Kindig, Sitka

LETTERS POLICY

The Sentinel welcomes Letters to the Editor on issues of local interest. Letters should be 500 words or fewer. A letter should be addressed to the editor, and not be a copy of a letter to a third party. Letters must be signed with the writer's name. Anonymous letters or those written under a pseudonym will not be considered. No more than one letter per person per month, please. Letters may be edited for length or content. A phone number must be provided for verification purposes, but it will not be printed. Letters from local residents will be given preference.

Weather

Sitka Forecast

For tonight expect a low of 43 degrees with a 20 percent chance of rain followed by mostly cloudy skies. For Wednesday, a high of 51 with a 20 percent chance of rain followed by an overnight low of 43 and mostly cloudy skies.

Sitka Weather

Temperatures ranged from 43 to 58 degrees, the wind gustied to 19 mph at 6:33 p.m., and no rain was logged in the 24 hours ending at midnight last night, Sitka Flight Service Station reports.

# Ocean Monitors Face Sharp Budget Cuts

By TODD RICHMOND  
Associated Press

Capt. Ed Enos makes his living as a harbor pilot in Hawaii, clambering aboard arriving ships in the predawn hours and guiding them into port.

His world revolves around wind speeds, current strength and wave swells. When Enos is bobbing in dangerous waters in the dark, his cellphone is his lifeline: with a few taps he can access the Integrated Ocean Observing System and pull up the data needed to guide what are essentially floating warehouses safely to the dock.

But maybe not for much longer. President Donald Trump wants to eliminate all federal funding for the observing system's regional operations. Scientists say the cuts could mean the end of efforts to gather real-time data crucial to navigating treacherous harbors, plotting tsunami escape routes and predicting hurricane intensity.

"It's the last thing you should be shutting down," Enos said. "There's no money wasted. Right at a time when we should be getting more money to do more work to benefit the public, they want to turn things off. That's the wrong strategy at the wrong time for the wrong reasons."

Monitoring system tracks all things ocean

The IOOS system launched about 20 years ago. It's made up of 11 regional associations in multiple states and territories, including the Virgin Islands, Alaska, Hawaii, Washington state, Michigan, South Carolina and Southern California.

The regional groups are networks of university researchers, conservation groups, businesses and anyone else gathering or using maritime data. The associations are the Swiss army knife of oceanography, using buoys, submersible drones and radar installations to track water temperature, wind speed, atmospheric pressure, wave speeds, swell heights and current strength.

The networks monitor the Great Lakes, U.S. coastlines, the Gulf of Mexico, which Trump renamed the Gulf of America, the Gulf of Alaska, the Caribbean and the South Pacific and upload member data to public websites in real time.

Maritime community and military rely on system data

Cruise ship, freighter and tanker pilots like Enos, as well as the U.S. Navy and Coast Guard, use the information directly to navigate harbors safely, plot courses around storms and conduct search-and-rescue operations.

The associations' observations feed into National Weather Service forecasts. The Pacific Northwest association uses tsunami data to post real-time coastal escape routes on a public-facing app. And the Hawaii association not only posts data that is helpful to harbor pilots but tracks hurricane intensity and tiger sharks that have been tagged for research.

The associations also track toxic algal blooms, which can force beach closures and kill fish. The maps help commercial anglers avoid those emp-

ty regions. Water temperature data can help identify heat layers within the ocean and, because it's harder for fish to survive in those layers, knowing hot zones helps anglers target better fishing grounds.

The regional networks are not formal federal agencies but are almost entirely funded through federal grants through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The current federal budget allocates \$43.5 million for the networks. A Republican bill in the House natural resources committee would actually send them more money, \$56 million annually, from 2026 through 2030.

Cuts catch network administrators by surprise

A Trump administration memo leaked in April proposes a \$2.5 billion cut to the Department of Commerce, which oversees NOAA, in the 2026 federal budget.

Part of the proposal calls for eliminating federal funding for the regional monitoring networks, even though the memo says one of the activities the administration wants the commerce department to focus on is collecting ocean and weather data.

The memo offered no other justifications for the cuts. The proposal stunned network users.

"We've worked so hard to build an incredible system and it's running smoothly, providing data that's important to the economy. Why would you break it?" said Jack Barth, an Oregon State oceanographer who shares data with the Pacific Northwest association.

"What we're providing is a window into the ocean and without those measures we frankly won't know what's coming at us. It's like turning off the headlights," Barth said.

NOAA officials declined to comment on the cuts and potential impacts, saying in an email to The Associated Press that they do not do "speculative interviews."

Network's future remains unclear

Nothing is certain. The 2026 federal fiscal year starts Oct. 1. The budget must pass the House, the Senate and get the president's signature before it can take effect. Lawmakers could decide to fund the regional networks after all.

Network directors are trying not to panic. If the cuts go through, some associations might survive by selling their data or soliciting grants from sources outside the federal government. But the funding hole would be so significant that just keeping the lights on would be an uphill battle, they said. If the associations fold, other entities might be able to continue gathering data, but there will be gaps. Partnerships developed over years would evaporate and data won't be available in a single place like now, they said.

"People have come to us because we've been steady," Hawaii regional network director Melissa Iwamoto said. "We're a known entity, a trusted entity. No one saw this coming, the potential for us not to be here."

# Rubio, Senators Argue Over Foreign Policies

By MATTHEW LEE and ELLEN KNICKMEYER  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Democratic senators sparred today over the Trump administration's foreign policies, ranging from Ukraine and Russia to the Middle East, Latin America, the slashing of the U.S. foreign assistance budget and refugee admissions.

Rubio defended the administration's decisions to his former colleagues during a Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing, his first since being confirmed on President Donald Trump's inauguration day.

He said "America is back" and claimed four months of foreign-policy achievements, even as many of them remain frustratingly inconclusive. Among them, the resumption of nuclear talks with Iran, efforts to bring Russia and Ukraine into peace talks and efforts to end the war in Gaza between Israel and Hamas.

America's top diplomat praised agreements with El Salvador and other Latin American countries to accept migrant deportees, saying "secure borders, safe communities and zero tolerance for criminal cartels are once again the guiding principles of our foreign policy."

He also rejected assertions that massive cuts to his department's budget would hurt America's standing abroad. Instead, he said the cuts would actually improve American status and the U.S. reputation internationally.

Hearing opens with a joke, then turns serious

Committee Chairman Jim Risch opened the hearing with praise for Trump's changes and spending cuts and welcomed what he called the administration's promising nuclear talks with Iran.

Risch also noted what he jokingly called "modest disagreement" with Democratic lawmakers, who used today's hearing to confront Rubio about Trump administration moves they say are weakening U.S. influence globally.

Yet, Democrats on the committee, including ranking member Jeanne Shaheen of New Hampshire, Chris Murphy



Edwina Wilson stands in what is left of her destroyed home May 18, in London, Ky., after a severe storm passed through the area. (AP Photo/Carolyn Kaster)

# More Storms, Fewer Staffers Worry NWS

By SETH BORENSTEIN  
AP Science Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — As nasty tornadoes popped up from Kansas to Kentucky, a depleted National Weather Service was in scramble mode.

The agency's office in Jackson, Kentucky, had begun closing nightly as deep cuts by Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency began hitting. But the weather service kept staffers on overtime Friday night to stay on top of the deadly storms, which killed nearly 20 people in the Jackson office's forecast area.

It's a scenario likely to be repeated as the U.S. is on track to see more tornadoes this year than in 2024, which was the second-busiest tornado year on record. Forecasters said there was at least a 10% risk of tornadoes today for 10.6 million people in parts of Missouri, Arkansas, Oklahoma and Texas. Weather service veterans expressed concern about the agency's ability to keep up in the face of the cuts.

Rich Thompson, lead operations forecaster at the NWS Storm Prediction Center in Norman, Oklahoma, said the job is getting done. But he acknowledged that staffing cuts have "made it harder on us."

"It has made it hard on the local offices just to make sure that we have all of our important duties covered. But, I mean, most of the people take those important duties seriously, so we're going to do what it takes to cover it," Thompson said. "I hope we're not in the same staffing situation long term. ... It would be hard to sustain this for months or years."

NWS spokesperson Erica Grow Cei said the Jackson office "remained fully staffed through the duration of the event using surge staffing" and had support from neighboring offices.

A leaner weather service is seeing more extreme weather

The Storm Prediction Center had tallied 883 local tornado reports this year as of Monday, which was 35% higher than average for this time of year.

Many former weather service employees, especially those fired by the Trump administration, remain connected to the agency's inner workings. They describe an agency that's somehow getting forecasts and warnings out in time, but is also near the breaking point.

"They'll continue to answer the bell as long as they can, but you can only ask people to work 80 hours or 120 hours a week, you know for so long," said Elbert "Joe" Friday, a former weather service director. "They may be so bleary-eyed, they can't identify what's going on on the radar."

Tom DiLiberto, a weather service meteorologist and spokesman who was fired in earlier rounds of the job cuts, said the situation is like a boat with leaks "and you have a certain amount of pieces of duct tape and you keep moving duct tape to different holes. At some point, you can't."

As of March, some of the weather service offices issuing tornado warnings Friday and Sunday were above the 20% vacancy levels that outside experts have said is a critical threshold. Those include Jackson, with a 25% vacancy

# Self-Driving Teslas Set For Road, Musk Claims

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Elon Musk said that he expects hundreds of thousands of self-driving Teslas will be on the road requiring no human intervention by the end of next year and that he is committed to staying as CEO of the company for at least another five years.

The billionaire also said in a pair of interviews today that he has no regrets about leading the job-slashing Department of Government Efficiency under the Trump administration. He downplayed any damage to the Tesla brand from that role, saying demand for Teslas has experienced a "major rebound." That's potentially a big development given that the latest public sales figures from Europe and U.S. show steep declines in sales for several months running.

"We'll probably have hundreds of thousands, if not over a million, Teslas doing self-driving in the U.S.," Musk said in an CNBC interview today, adding that passengers won't need to pay attention to the road. "Like you're asleep and you wake up at your destination."

His comment about sticking around as CEO was made earlier in the day at

rate, Louisville, Kentucky, with a 29% vacancy rate, and Wichita, Kansas, with a 32% vacancy rate, according to data compiled by weather service employees and obtained by the AP.

Technologies used to predict tornadoes have significantly improved, but radar can't replace a well-rested staff that has to figure out how nasty or long-lasting storms will be and how to get information to the public, said Karen Kosiba, managing director of the Flexible Array of Mesonets and Radars (FARM) facility, a network of weather equipment used for research.

"There really are not enough people to handle everything," said University of Oklahoma meteorology professor Howard Bluestein, who chased six tornadoes Sunday. "If the station is understaffed, that could affect the quality of forecasts."

Cuts hit in different ways

Former weather service Director Louis Uccellini said budget cuts have drastically reduced the number of weather balloon launches, which provide critical information for forecasts. And weather service workers aren't being allowed to travel to help train local disaster officials for what to do when they get dangerous weather warnings, he said.

Though the number of tornadoes is nearly at a record pace, Thompson and other experts said the tornado outbreak of the last few days is mostly normal for this time of year.

For tornadoes to form, the atmosphere needs a collision of warm moist air from the Gulf of Mexico and storm systems chugging through via the jet stream, the river of air that brings weather fronts from west to east, said Thompson, Bluestein and Harold Brooks of the weather service's National Severe Storm Laboratory.

"The moisture that we're getting from the Gulf of Mexico is a lot more than we used to get," said Bluestein. "That makes the likelihood that we're getting a stronger storm higher and that's pretty unusual."

Temperatures in the Gulf are a couple of degrees warmer than usual for this time of year, according to the weather service.

The connection between climate change and tornadoes is not as well understood as the links between other types of extreme weather such as heavy rainfall and heat waves, experts say.

"Under the climate change scenario, we're kind of supercharging the atmosphere on some days and then actually reducing the favorability on others," said Ohio State University atmospheric sciences professor Jana Houser.

Scientists are also seeing more tornadoes in January, February, March and other times when it used to be too cold for twisters to form, especially in Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi and Tennessee, she said.

More people are also living in harm's way, Brooks said. That's why Uccellini and others see increasing risks to people and property.

"When you have this kind of threat and you're understaffed at some point, something's going to slip through the cracks," Uccellini said. "I can't tell you when it's going to happen."

the Qatar Economic Forum hosted by Bloomberg.

Musk has been promising fully autonomous, self-driving vehicles "next year" for a decade but the pressure is on now as Tesla begins a test run of its self-driving taxi service in Austin, Texas, next month.

"This is a watershed time for Tesla, and Musk is doubling down on these numbers," said Wedbush Securities analyst Dan Ives. "These are pretty bullish forecasts."

Tesla's stock closed today up nearly 1% to \$345. After a steep fall this year, the stock is up more than 50% in little over a month as investors have cheered Musk's decision to scale back his time in Washington and spend more time running the company.

Musk also gave new details about the Austin service, saying Tesla taxis will be remotely monitored at first and "geofenced" to certain areas of the city deemed the safest to navigate. He told CNBC that he expected to initially run 10 or so taxis, increase that number rapidly and start offering the service in Los Angeles, San Antonio, San Francisco and other cities.



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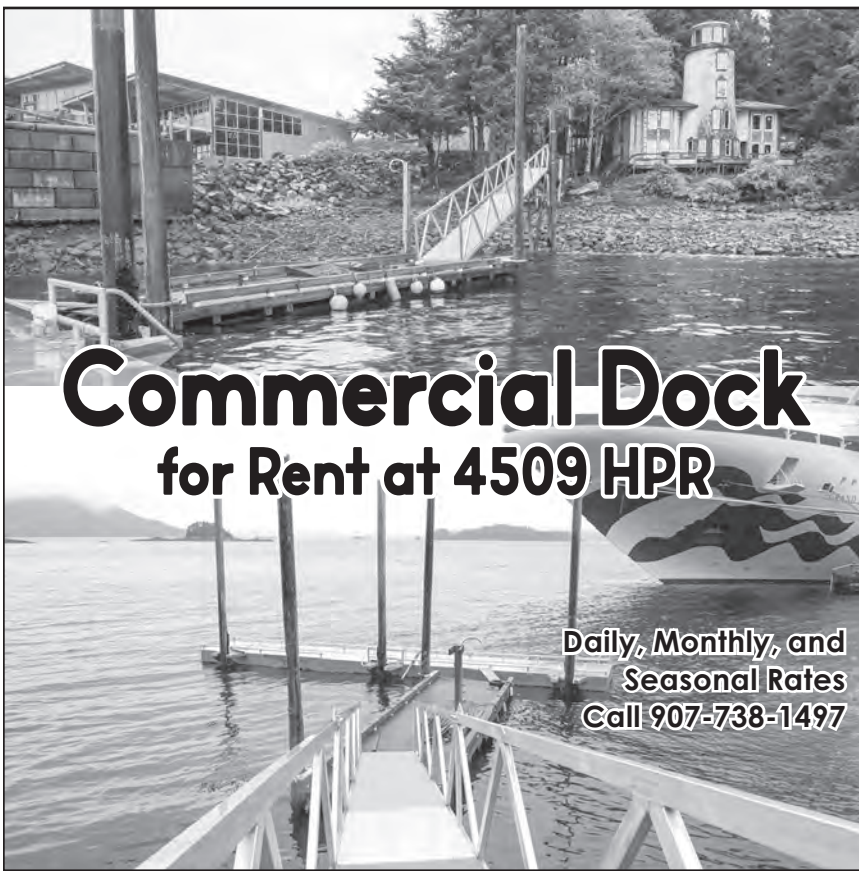
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### Path of Hope Cleanup on Tap

Sitka Cancer Survivor's Society invites the public to help with a spring cleanup event at the Path of Hope noon Saturday, May 31.

### 'Manual Therapy' Workshop on Tap

A free workshop on the benefits of manual therapy will be given noon-1 p.m. Friday at 311 Price Street.

Physical therapist Alicia Haseltine will offer techniques such as massage, mobilizations and dry needling to help with aches and pains. Sign up at: <https://l.btrr.to/1q4ZA> or call/text 907 623-8708. For ore information go to [www.medicinebymovementwellness.com](http://www.medicinebymovementwellness.com).

## Police Blotter

Sitka Police Department received the following calls in the 24 hours ending at 8 a.m. today.

#### May 19

At 9:47 a.m. a fender bender was reported at Etolin Way and Lake Street, when a vehicle backed into another. Damage was minor.

A caller reported seeing a vehicle with no taillights at HPR and Kuhnle Drive.

A caller reported losing post office keys.

At 4:48 p.m. an intoxicated person was reported in the 100 block of Lincoln Street. Police found the person was sober.

At 3:56 p.m. the door of a van in the long-term parking area at the airport was reported open. Police located the owner, who said the van had issues and its doors open and close on their own. Police closed the door.

A caller reported the theft of a \$600 guitar and other items from his mother's home.

#### May 20

At 12:06 a.m. three bears were reported in the area of Islander Drive. Police found no bears in the area.

### Emergency Calls

Sitka Fire Department received three ambulance calls Monday.

### Public Meeting On Cell Towers

A public meeting will be held 6-8 p.m. Thursday, May 22, at Harrigan Centennial Hall to discuss the planned installation of new cell phone towers around Sitka.

Sitkans for Safe Technology is working to encourage the City and Borough of Sitka to adopt building code provisions to protect health, safety and property values. Members of the group and speakers from the Children's Health Defense Organization will discuss via Zoom current research about possible impacts of RF radiation on human health and the environment.

The panel will go over ways the community can lessen possible effects of cell phone towers on public health through code provisions to guide applicants and public officials in making decisions about potential installation.

The event is free to the public. For questions call Hal Spackman, (907) 738-3766.

### Sitka Historical Walking Tour Set

Sitka Maritime Heritage Society will offer an hour-and-a-half-long walking tour on Japonski Island 1 p.m. May 25.

The tour will start at the Japonski Island Boathouse, across the O'Connell Bridge, and go to the remains of the WWII Naval Air Base and U.S. Army Coast Defenses. Tour guides will tell about their role in the war.

The tour includes the background of this place in the context of Tlingit Aani or Tlingit America and how it got to be part of the U.S.A., with Russians and the circumstances of the transfer of 1867, and more, organizer said.

The tour costs \$49 for adults, \$39 for teens, and free for children.

Participants are invited to arrive early to see the progress on the rehabilitation of the historic boathouse. For information go to: [sitkamaritime.org](http://sitkamaritime.org)

### RIDE to Take Week's Break

The RIDE public transit has updated the times it will not be running due to Memorial Day observance, rebranding, cleaning and staff training.

The new dates it will not be in operation are Monday, May 26, through Friday, May 30.

Service will be back in full swing on Monday, June 2.

"We thank everyone for their understanding during this outage in service and wish everyone a meaningful and memorable Memorial Day," the RIDE said. Contact the RIDE office at 907 747-7103 with questions.



**SCHOLARSHIP PRESENTATION** – Megan Pasternak presents a \$1000 scholarship to Rex Adres, Sitka High graduate, from Ocean Wave Quilters guild. The group holds an annual auction of mini-quilts and related items to raise funds for scholarships. Thanks to a donation of items from the estate of Bobbie Leichty, this year the guild was able to award two scholarships to Mt. Edgecumbe High seniors, one to a Pacific High senior and one to Adres in addition to one to Sitka Fine Arts Camp. (Photo provided to the Sentinel)

## Native Artists to Teach At Sheldon Jackson Museum

The Sheldon Jackson Museum and Friends of Sheldon Jackson Museum invite the public to sign up for free hands-on art classes with Alaska Native artists-in-residence between June and September.

The classes will be held at the Sheldon Jackson Museum with some offered simultaneously on zoom. While the classes are offered at no cost, some classes require students to pay a materials fee to the instructor at the time of sign-up.

In some cases, students must acquire materials online or locally in advance of the class. All classes require students to sign up in advance by calling 907-747-8981 or stopping by the museum in-person.

This year, from mid-June until mid-October, the museum is hosting a series of five artists-in-residence. Artists include relief print maker and acrylic painter Unangax' Liz Chikayaasix' Morrow (June 17-July 3) Yup'ik ivory, baleen, and wood jewelry maker Shirley Hootch (July 15-Aug. 3), Yup'ik & Curyung Tribe bead worker and graphic artist Amber Webb (Aug. 11-31), Koyukon Athabaskan, and Unangax', & Inupiaq painter and seal gut jewelry maker Danielle Larsen (Sept. 2-20).

This year's residency program will include the following classes:

–A two-part relief printing class Wed., June 25, from 10 a.m.-noon and 1-3 p.m. with Liz Morrow (Unangax'), in-person and on zoom. Students must order some materials online prior to attending. For a list of supplies, call (907) 747-8981. This class is for ages 12+.

–A two-part maskette earring making class taught by Shirley Hootch (Yup'ik) Friday, July 18, and Friday, July 25, 1-4 p.m. both days, in-person. Students should take a small set of acrylic paints and brushes to the class and will need to pay Hootch a \$20 material fee.

It is open to all ages. –A two-part fish skin earring making class taught by Amber Webb (Yup'ik & Curyung Tribe) on Friday, Aug. 15, 11 a.m.-noon and 1-4 p.m., in-person only. Students will need to pay Webb a \$20 materials fee. The class is open to ages 12 and older.

–A painting still life class taught by Danielle Larsen (Koyukon Athabaskan, Unangax', & Inupiaq) on Thursday, Sept. 11, 12:30 p.m.-3:30 p.m., in-person and on zoom. This class is open to ages 10 and older. Students will need to buy some materials in advance of the class. For a list of supplies, call (907) 747-8981.

To view events a details related to the Native Artist Residency Program, visit the Friends of Sheldon Jackson Museum Facebook page or website at

<https://friendsofsjm.com/calendar/> or the Alaska State Museum website at [https://museums.alaska.gov/sheldon\\_jackson/sjhome.html](https://museums.alaska.gov/sheldon_jackson/sjhome.html).

The Native Artist Residency Program is made possible through the support of the Maxwell Hanrahan Foundation, Alaska Airlines, Friends of the Sheldon Jackson Museum, and private donations. To learn more about how you can support the residency program, visit [www.friendsofsjm.com](http://www.friendsofsjm.com).

Summer hours at the Sheldon Jackson Museum are 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays. Summer admission is \$9 for adults and \$8 for seniors. Visitors 18 and under are admitted free of charge. Assistance is available for visitors with special needs.

For information on operations or events, contact the museum by calling (907) 747-8981.

### No Tobacco Day Marked May 30

SEARHC is teaming up with the Sitka HOPE Coalition for a community event to observe World No Tobacco Day.

The organizations will be set up outside AC Lakeside Grocery 4-6 p.m. Friday, May 30, with prize giveaways, quit resources, information on the health harms of smoking and vaping, and a visit from Ciggy Butts to interact with passersby.

This event is part of SEARHC's year-round commitment to supporting Southeast Alaskans who wish to quit tobacco and raise awareness about smoking and vaping risks, especially among youths.

One in four Alaska high schoolers has used e-cigarettes, and cigarette smoking is more common among American Indian and Alaska Native people than almost any other racial or ethnic group in the United States, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention statistics cite.

### Class Dismissed

The last day of school for students in the Sitka School District is Wednesday, May 21.

Students will be dismissed as follows:

First grade and bus, 11:45 a.m.  
Kindergarten pick-up, noon  
Grades 2-5, noon  
Pacific High School, 12:30 p.m.  
Blatchley Middle School, 12:45 p.m.  
Sitka High School, 12:50 p.m.

No lunches will be served. Parents should contact the school offices with questions.

## Rites of Passage For Eighth Grade

Blatchley Middle School will hold its annual Rites of Passage ceremony 11 a.m.-1 p.m. May 21 at Sitka High School gymnasium.

Parents and guests are asked to park at the front of the building and enter through the gym door.

Students will be dismissed from the high school.

## Shrimp FOR SALE Starting May 19

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## Indoor Plant & Succulent Sale & Bake Sale

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Youth Advocates of Sitka  
805 Lincoln Street**



## Calendar of Events

#### WEDNESDAY

6-8 a.m. MEHS Aquatic Center pool open  
10 a.m. Tongass Tots Playgroup, St. Peter's See House  
11-2 Salvation Army Little Store open  
Noon Alaska Native Plant Month webinar with Vivian Mork, <https://bit.ly/ANPSfood>  
Noon-2 p.m. MEHS Aquatic Center pool open  
Noon White Elephant Shop open  
Noon AA, St. Peter's basement, call AA hotline 747-8866 for information  
12:15 p.m. STA Education/Scholarship Committee, 204 Signaka Way  
2 p.m. Senior Balance Class, ANB Founders Hall  
4:30 p.m. Sitka Parkinson's Support Group, 1212 Seward Ave. (the old BOQ) 907 747-3461  
6:30 p.m. STA Tribal Council, 204 Signaka Way  
7 p.m. Sitka Planning Commission, Harrigan Centennial Hall  
7 p.m. Sitka Sportsman's Association Indoor Range open  
7 p.m. AA, St. Gregory's Church, 606 Etolin Street, info: 907-747-8866

#### THURSDAY

6-8 a.m. MEHS Aquatic Center pool open  
10:30 a.m. SAIL Senior Hike, Ben Grussendorf Forest and Muskeg trail  
11-2 Salvation Army Little Store open  
Noon AA, St. Peter's basement, AA hotline 907-747-8866 for information  
Noon Alanon Zoom, [sitkaalanon@gmail.com](mailto:sitkaalanon@gmail.com), for login info  
Noon White Elephant Shop open  
4-6 p.m. Vote Yes on Proposition 1 Open House, Unitarian Universalist Fellowship Hall  
6:30 p.m. Women's AA, Unitarian Fellowship Hall, AA Hotline 907 747-8866  
7 p.m. AA, St. Peter's basement, 611 Lincoln Street, AA hotline 907-747-8866

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SENTINEL SPORTS

Knicks and Pacers Set for Dramatic Showdown

By BRINA MAHONEY  
AP Sports Writer  
GREENBURGH, N.Y. (AP) — Jalen Brunson held a steel chair. Tyrese Haliburton had brass knuckles.

As the star point guards glared at each other in a WWE wrestling ring last summer in Madison Square Garden, it seemed a fitting next step in the rivalry between the Indiana Pacers and New York Knicks. It's already featured headbutts and chokes, so why not weapons?

The teams go at it again starting Wednesday night in Game 1 of the Knicks' first trip to the Eastern Conference finals in 25 years, with the winner of their ninth playoff match-up headed to the NBA Finals.

"It's obviously a storied rivalry between the two franchises, so to add another chapter to it is going to be a lot of fun," Haliburton said.

It sure was for Haliburton and the Pacers last year when the teams met in the second round. Indiana won Game 7 at Madison Square Garden against a Knicks team that was decimated by injuries, shooting an NBA playoff-record 67.1% from the field in a 130-109 romp. Haliburton scored 26 points and afterward wore a sweatshirt to his news conference with a picture of Reggie Miller making a choke signal toward Knicks fan Spike Lee on the sidelines during a playoff game three decades earlier.

Haliburton returned to the Garden to troll New York fans again about a month later, attempting to interfere in a match on behalf of Lo-



Knicks Jalen Brunson (11) drives past Pacers Tyrese Haliburton (0) during the second half, May 10, 2024, in Indianapolis. (AP Photo/Michael Conroy, File)

gan Paul. Brunson, with a seat in the crowd near the ring, intervened and LA Knight pinned Paul.

After the match, Brunson grabbed the chair and entered the ring to protect the winner when it appeared Paul and Haliburton had him surrounded.

"I'll be back! I'll be back!" Haliburton yelled toward fans after exiting the ring.

Well, here he comes.

"It was obviously something that he wanted to do and the way he played last year in the playoffs, I mean, it was fitting," Brunson said. "And so, he played well in the Garden. Obviously Knicks fans and Pacers fans, they go back and forth. But I think he did a great job with it last year but now we're moving on."

A Knicks-Pacers series could be penciled into the spring schedule in the 1990s. The teams met six times in an eight-year span, starting with a 1993 series that included John Starks getting ejected for head-butting Miller. Indiana won the last one in that stretch, a victory in the 2000 East finals the most recent time the Knicks advanced this far.

This time, it's a surprise. Cleveland and Boston ran away to the top two records in the East, but the Knicks ousted the defending champions and the Pacers blew away the top-seeded Cavaliers in five games to set up this matchup between the No. 3 and No. 4 seeds.

Things are different now. Brunson and Haliburton are friendly, having been teammates in 2023

on the U.S. team that played in the Basketball World Cup. But Miller will be in the arena, working the games as an analyst for TNT, so there will be a reminder of the way Knicks-Pacers used to be.

"There was definitely a sense of hatred for each other. So I think that makes a good rivalry," Knicks center Karl-Anthony Towns said. "They have a history of finding a way to end each other's season, so it's up to us now to add our names into history and see what we do."

The Pacers lead the series 5-3. When the teams have met in the East finals, the Knicks won in 1994 and 1999 — when they reached the NBA Finals as a No. 8 seed — and the Pacers won in 2000.

The Knicks went 2-1 against the Pacers, with all the meetings before the All-Star break. Towns had 30.3 points and 12 rebounds per game for the Knicks, who averaged 124 points on 53.9% shooting.

The Pacers were just 10-15 after a loss to Charlotte on Dec. 8. Counting the playoffs, they are 48-19 since.

An NBA Finals matchup between the Knicks and Minnesota Timberwolves is a possibility after they made a blockbuster trade on the eve of the preseason. The Knicks acquired Towns by sending Julius Randle and Donte DiVincenzo to Minnesota. Towns, the Wolves' No. 1 pick in 2015, isn't thinking about that yet.

"We've got to get there first," he said. "I ain't going to worry about something that we're not there yet. Step by step."

"From 10 to 15, I felt like I executed as good as I had almost all week," Scheffler said. "That was a very important time in the tournament."

And then it was over before it was really over, just like his other two major titles. He wears everyone down with near flawless execution, the hallmark of his game.

Scheffler looked over from the 15th hole to see Rahm on his way to making bogey. DeChambeau had faded by then. Scheffler started the back nine in a tie. He was up by six shots toward the end.

He became the first player since Tiger Woods in 2007 to win by at least five shots in consecutive PGA Tour starts in the middle of the season. He won in Dallas by eight, the PGA Championship by five, and now goes to Colonial with expectations higher than ever.

Getting on the cusp of the career Grand Slam indeed is hard, and Scheffler is not there yet. But as many comparisons as there are with Woods, it's not too much to think Scheffler can win at Oakmont next month and at Royal Portrush in July.

He's not thinking that far ahead. Scheffler doesn't set goals, he only appreciates winning. Getting from the first hole Thursday to the 72nd hold on Sunday is what he enjoys.

A performance like that — by a player like that — makes it easy to forget McIlroy won at Pebble Beach, The Players Championship and the Masters. It was a weird week for McIlroy at Quail Hollow, mainly the Masters champion feeling above any obligation to speak to the media for four days, even the Irish who have documented him his entire career.

The last anyone heard from McIlroy was the day before the PGA Championship started. The career Grand Slam achieved, he said anything else he accomplished in golf would be a bonus. He still competes. He just no longer chases.

The chase now falls to Scheffler. And all he cares about his competing.

Seattle Routs White Sox 5-1

CHICAGO (AP) — Julio Rodríguez hit a grand slam, Luis Castillo pitched seven crisp innings and the Seattle Mariners beat the Chicago White Sox 5-1 on Monday night for their fourth straight victory.

Castillo allowed three hits, struck out five and walked none in his first win since April 26. The right-hander is 2-0 with a 1.71 ERA in four career starts against Chicago.

The last-place White Sox wasted a sharp performance by Davis Martin in their fifth consecutive loss. The right-hander pitched a career-high 7 1/3 innings of four-hit ball.

Cam Booser replaced Martin (2-5) with one on in the eighth. He walked J.P. Crawford and surrendered Mitch Garver's pinch-hit single before Rodríguez connected for his second career slam.

Castillo (4-3) retired his last 14 batters. He threw 94 pitches, 64 for strikes.

Chicago scored its only run on Andrew Vaughn's RBI single with two out in the ninth. Andrés Muñoz struck out Mi-

chael A. Taylor with the bases loaded for his 15th save.

The AL West-leading Mariners used three consecutive two-out singles to score their first run in the third. Ben Williamson raced home from second on Jorge Polanco's grounder into right field.

Polanco is a .273 hitter (106 for 388) with 24 homers and 73 RBIs in 101 career games against the White Sox.

Chicago had a prime scoring opportunity in the second. Joshua Palacios hit a leadoff double and moved to third on Vaughn's groundout. But Austin Slater struck out swinging before Josh Rojas flied out.

Randy Arozarena robbed Vaughn with a diving catch in left for the final out of the seventh. The White Sox challenged the play, but the call on the field was upheld.

The Mariners improved to 23-11 since April 9.

Bryse Wilson (0-2, 6.00 ERA) pitches for Chicago today. Seattle did not announce its starter before the series opener.

Angels Take Down Slumping A's

WEST SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — Taylor Ward hit a two-run homer, Nolan Schanuel also went deep and the Los Angeles Angels beat the skidding Athletics 4-3 on Monday night in the opener of a four-game series.

Kenley Jansen struck out Tyler Soderstrom for the final out with a runner on second. Coming off a surprising three-game sweep at Dodger Stadium, the Angels (21-25) have won four in a row to start a seven-game trip.

The Athletics (22-26) have lost six straight and 10 of 12, falling to 8-14 at Sutter Health Park.

Schanuel, who had three hits and scored twice, connected off J.T. Ginn for his third homer this season to give the Angels the lead two batters into the game. Ginn was activated to make his fourth start of the year and first since April 24, when elbow inflammation landed him on the 10-day injured list.

Lawrence Butler's double, a walk and a hit batter loaded the bases with nobody out in the bottom of the first against Angels starter José Soriano. Butler scored when Brent Rooker grounded into a double play, and Shea Langeliers' infield single made it

2-1. Zach Neto singled and Schanuel doubled to start the third. Yoán Moncada had an RBI groundout before Ward hit his 13th homer for a 4-2 lead.

Soderstrom doubled with two outs in the fifth and scored on Rooker's single to make it 4-3.

Soriano (3-4) went six innings, allowing three runs on six hits and four walks. Jansen allowed a two-out single to Jacob Wilson in the ninth before pinch-runner Max Schuemann stole second. Jansen fanned Soderstrom on three pitches for his ninth save in nine opportunities.

Ginn (1-2) left after four innings and 79 pitches, yielding four runs and six hits with seven strikeouts.

Soriano loaded the bases with one out in the third before striking out Langeliers and Nick Kurtz swinging to escape unscathed.

Rooker has a 15-game hitting streak against the Angels. Bill North set the club record in the series at 17 games spanning the 1974 and '75 seasons.

RHP Kyle Hendricks (1-5, 5.18 ERA) pitches today for the Angels against RHP Gunnar Hoglund (1-1, 3.78), who makes his fourth career start.

Brit Aims for 20th Everest Ascent

KATHMANDU, Nepal (AP) — A British climber who scaled Mount Everest for the 19th time, breaking his own record for the most ascents of the world's highest peak by a non-Sherpa guide, returned from the mountain today and said he is already planning his next attempt.

Kenton Cool, 51, from southwest England, scaled the 8,849-meter (29,032-foot) summit on Sunday before flying on a helicopter with his clients back to the Nepalese capital, Kathmandu.

"I am 51 now, and I have been coming here since 2004 to climb Everest," Cool said at Kathmandu's airport today. "I have at least one more climb for next year — maybe 20 or 21 (total). After that I'll start climbing other mountains in Nepal."

Cool has scaled Mount Everest almost every year since 2004.

He was unable to climb it in 2014 because the season was canceled after 16 Sherpa guides were killed in an avalanche, and again in 2015 when an earthquake triggered an avalanche that killed 19 people. The 2020 climbing season was canceled because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Only Nepali Sherpa guides have scaled the peak more times than Cool. Kami Rita

holds the record for the most successful ascents of Mount Everest at 30 times. He is currently on the mountain and is expected to attempt to reach the top in the next few days.

Cool said his climb was smooth and that he faced no problems, but he noticed that many climbers were trying to reach the peak on the same day.

Hundreds of climbers and their guides are on the mountain during the popular spring climbing season, hoping to scale the world's highest peak.

"Mountaineering is an amazing sport which is open to everybody, but you just need to be part of it responsibly and we have seen some people coming to Everest — perhaps they do not have the experience that they should," Cool said, adding that it was not necessary to limit the number of climbers each season.

Several climbers have already scaled the peak this month and hundreds more and their guides are on the mountain attempting to reach the summit before the climbing season finishes at the end of this month. Weather conditions then deteriorate with the rainy monsoon season making climbing more difficult.

Scheffler Brings Grand Slam back into View

By DOUG FERGUSON  
AP Golf Writer

The last chance for another career Grand Slam this year seemingly ended when Jordan Spieth missed the cut at the PGA Championship.

The next two days might have changed the outlook.

Scottie Scheffler won the PGA Championship with two stretches that were simply sublime. There was the closing five holes on Saturday that he played in 5-under par to build the lead, and the opening six holes on the back nine Sunday to stay there.

In both cases, he didn't miss a shot. Not one.

"I hit the important shots well this week, and that's why I'm walking away with the trophy," Scheffler said. "When I needed to, I feel like I hit the shots."

This was the epitome of execution, enough to wonder if he can win the U.S. Open and British Open over the next two months, the two majors he doesn't already have.

Scheffler, with two Masters green jackets and the Wanamaker Trophy, now is halfway home to the career Grand Slam. He's been No. 1 in the world for the last two years, and really golf's best since 2022. He has been No. 1 for 89% of the time since he first got to the top of the ranking.

Scheffler talked about the career Grand Slam a few days after Rory McIlroy won the Masters for the final leg. As usual, he delivered a dose of perspective.

"I've only won one," he said, his two majors coming from Augusta National. "That's the other side of the coin. It's not easy to get on the cusp, but it's a lot easier to get on the cusp than to actually pull it off. I've been playing some pretty good golf and I'm not even close."

He is a step closer now, and the way he played at Quail Hollow might make it look closer than it appears. This wasn't his best golf over four days, or even three



Scottie Scheffler celebrates after winning the PGA Championship golf tournament, Sunday in Charlotte, N.C. (AP Photo/George Walker IV)

days.

It took him a while to get going in his round the opening two days. His lifelong coach, Randy Smith, was with him on the range Friday evening, placing his hands on Scheffler's hips and crouched over to avoid being hit by the club, all to make sure his hips were clearing.

But oh, those two stretches.

His 3-wood into the 304-yard 14th hole was the shot of the tournament, settling just under 3 feet away that set off his eagle-birdie-par-birdie-birdie finish for a three-shot lead. The only par was a 7-iron off a slightly sidehill lie to a right pin that was awkward. He hit it to 12 feet and called it his best shot of the day. Scheffler doesn't often rank shots. This was special.

That was to build a lead. Tougher still was having to hold it on Sunday with Bryson DeChambeau briefly leading and Jon Rahm charging, two daunting sights in a major.

Scheffler was struggling, at least by

his standards. On eight of nine holes on the front nine, from either the tee or the approach, the miss was to the left. He went from a five-shot lead to a tie with Rahm. His caddie, Ted Scott, doesn't get overly worried about much and suggested to him, "Maybe you're aimed over there. Just try and hit a little further right."

Genius.

Scheffler hit every fairway — the bunker on the reachable 14th, which should count given the ideal position — and was in the right spot on every green.

"I knew I needed nine really good holes," he said.

To hear him explain it was brilliant in its sheer simplicity.

"I hit a good shot on 10, good approach shot, and I executed. From there, fairway on 11, really good iron shot. Fairway on 12, really good iron shot. Good iron shot on 13. Good tee ball on 14, good birdie there. Two great shots on 15," he said.

Rinse and repeat.

White Sox Unveil Display for Pope Leo XIV

By JAY COHEN  
AP Sportd Writer

CHICAGO (AP) — There is a new landmark at the home of the Chicago White Sox — Section 140, Row 19, Seat 2.

That's where Father Bob — the future Pope Leo XIV — sat for Game 1 of the 2005 World Series.

The White Sox unveiled a graphic installation Monday that pays tribute to the new pontiff and that moment during their last championship run. The pillar artwork features a waving Pope Leo XIV, along with a picture from the TV broadcast of the future pope sitting with good friend Ed Schmit and his grandson, Eddie.

The team also is planning to do something to commemorate the Rate Field seat the pope occupied during the 2005 World Series opener.

"When people come into the ballpark, it's an interesting piece of our history and they're going to want to see it," said Brooks Boyer, the chief executive and marketing officer for the White Sox. "So we're going to be able to put something on that seat."

Robert Prevost became the first pope from the U.S. in the history of the Catholic Church when he was elected on May 8. The Chicago-born missionary, who took the name Leo XIV, is a White Sox fan, according to his friends and family.

Prevost attended the World Series opener with Schmit, a longtime season-

ticket holder who died in 2020. The White Sox beat the Houston Astros 5-3 on their way to a four-game sweep for the title.

Eddie Schmit, 25, who works in the family's day-care business, described the future pope as a great guy and kind-hearted.

"A lot of this is about the White Sox. It should be more about what kind of guy the pope is," Schmit said. "You look at some of the things he's done with his missions, I mean it's incredible. He's been in places that are so poor, just trying to help other people."

Prevost and Schmit knew each other through their work at a Catholic high school on Chicago's South Side, and Schmit's son, Nick, remains the account holder for the pope's World Series seat.

Ed Schmit used to tell Father Bob he was going to be the next pope, Schmit's daughter, Heidi Skokal, said.

"Right around when my dad was passing, Father Bob made sure, he couldn't be there, but made sure he spoke with him and everything," an emotional Skokal said. "And he said, 'Father Bob, Father Bob, I know you're going to be the next pope. I may not be here to see it.' And he goes, 'But I'll be definitely looking down.' And I'm sure he is today."

The White Sox, who have struggled on the field in recent years, and their fans have embraced their connection to the new pope since he was elected. The team said it sent a jersey and a hat to the



White Sox commemorate fandom of Pope Leo XIV with Graphic installation at Rate Field, Monday. (AP Photo/Nam Y. Huh)

Vatican after the announcement.

Some fans have been dressing as the pope for White Sox games, and there are several different T-shirts that celebrate the team's most famous fan.

"The pope absolutely has an open invite to come back," Boyer said. "To come sit in Section 140, to throw out a first pitch. Heck, maybe we'll let him get an at-bat."

MEHS Field Public Notice

Mt. Edgecumbe High School staff and students ask people to keep their dogs off the school's softball field.

The school is gearing up for the spring sports season and aims to keep the softball field clean, safe, and poop-free. We kindly ask that dogs stay off the field.

**Medvejie Solstice Run**  
June 21 at 9 a.m.

Please join us for the 18th running of this SHS Cross Country and Track program fundraiser. The three distance events will begin and end at Herring Cove, adjacent to the Beaver Lake Trailhead parking lot at the end of Sawmill Creek Road. All races will head out toward Medvejie Hatchery and back. The half marathon turn-around is at the Green Lake Power House, 10K near the Medvejie Hatchery, and the 5K at about half-way out to the hatchery. This is a hilly course, please train accordingly.

Registration: <https://runsignup.com/Race/Info/AK/Sitka/MedvejieSolsticeRun> (open until 8 p.m. on 6/20/25). Fees: \$30 - 5K, \$35 - 10K and \$45 - 1/2 marathon. Virtual events are also available for \$30.

In-person registration will be available on race day until 8:30 a.m. at Herring Cove but registration fees are \$5 more on race day. A non cotton T-shirt is included for the first 75 entrants. (SHS students run for free & t-shirt can be purchased separately.)

Volunteers are warmly invited to support this fun event. For more information email [runsitkahigh@gmail.com](mailto:runsitkahigh@gmail.com), or send a message on our Facebook page.

**Alpine Adventure Run Wait List Open**

All 125 limited entry spaces for the Alpine Adventure Run are filled. Wait list registration is open. Email [christinemariehoran@gmail.com](mailto:christinemariehoran@gmail.com) and request entry. A registration form will be sent to you. Your completed registration form and entry fee of \$50 will place you on the wait list in the order your forms and fees are turned in.

The race will take place on July 19, 2025. Wait listed runners move into the race when confirmed runners cancel. Entry fees are held and returned in full in the event you don't get into the run.

The race is a challenging seven-mile mountain run starting at St. Gregory's Catholic Church. The course climbs Gavan Hill and continues along the Harbor Mountain rim to the picnic area on Harbor Mountain.

Runners must be able to complete the course in 2.5 hours and be at least 15 years old. Registration costs \$50 and includes a t-shirt. For further information contact Chris Horan at [christinemariehoran@gmail.com](mailto:christinemariehoran@gmail.com) or call 907-747-6471.

The Alpine Adventure Run is conducted under a Special Use Permit with the Tongass National Forest.







# Israel Strikes Kill 85 In New Gaza Offensive

By WAFAA SHURAF, SAMY MAGDY and TIA GOLDENBERG Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — Israel pressed ahead Tuesday with its new military offensive in Gaza despite mounting international criticism, launching airstrikes that health officials said killed at least 85 Palestinians. Israeli officials said they also allowed in dozens more trucks carrying aid.

Two days after aid began entering Gaza, the desperately needed new supplies have not yet reached people in Gaza, which has been under an Israeli blockade for nearly three months, according to the United Nations. Experts have warned that many of Gaza's 2 million residents are at high risk of famine.

Under pressure, Israel agreed this week to allow a "minimal" amount of aid into the Palestinian territory after preventing the entry of food, medicine and fuel in an attempt to pressure the Hamas militant group. U.N. spokesperson Stéphane Dujarric said that although the aid has entered Gaza, aid workers were not able to bring it to distribution points where it is most needed, after the Israeli military forced them to reload the supplies onto separate trucks and workers ran out of time.

COGAT, the Israeli defense body that oversees humanitarian aid, said five trucks entered Monday and 93

trucks entered Tuesday. But Dujarric said the U.N. confirmed only a few dozen trucks entered Gaza on Tuesday.

The aid included flour for bakeries, food for soup kitchens, baby food and medical supplies. The U.N. humanitarian agency said it is prioritizing baby formula in the first shipments.

But none of that aid actually reached Palestinians, according to the U.N. Dujarric described the new security process for getting aid cleared to warehouses as "long, complex, complicated and dangerous." He said Israeli military requirements for aid workers to unload and reload the trucks are hindering efforts to distribute the aid. COGAT did not immediately comment on the new procedures.

The United Nations humanitarian agency received approval for about 100 trucks to enter Gaza, spokesman Jens Laerke said, which is far less than the 600 that entered daily during the latest ceasefire that Israel ended in March. Israel's Foreign Ministry said dozens are expected to enter each day.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said he decided to let in limited aid after pressure from allies, who told him they couldn't support Israel while devastating images of starvation were coming out of Gaza.

U.K. suspends trade negotiations and sanctions settler movement

But some close allies say the limited aid is not enough.

# New Trump Policy Puts Limit On COVID Shots

By MATTHEW PERRONE and LAURAN NEERGAARD Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration said today it will limit approval for seasonal COVID-19 shots to seniors and others at high risk pending more data on everyone else — raising questions about whether some people who want a vaccine this fall will be able to get one.

Top officials for the Food and Drug Administration laid out new standards for updated COVID shots, saying they'd continue to use a streamlined approach to make them available to adults 65 and older as well as children and younger adults with at least one high-risk health problem.

But the FDA framework, published today in the New England Journal of Medicine, urges companies to conduct large, lengthy studies before tweaked vaccines can be approved for healthier people. It's a stark break from the previous federal policy recommending an annual COVID shot for all Americans six months and older. In the paper and a subsequent online webcast, the FDA's top vaccine official said more than 100 million Americans still should qualify for what he termed a booster under the new guidance.

Dr. Vinay Prasad described the new

approach as a "reasonable compromise" that will allow vaccinations in high-risk groups to continue while generating new data about whether they still benefit healthier people.

"For many Americans we simply do not know the answer as to whether or not they should be getting the seventh or eighth or ninth or tenth COVID-19 booster," said Prasad, who joined the FDA earlier this month. He previously spent more than a decade in academia, frequently criticizing the FDA's handling of drug and vaccine approvals.

It's unclear what the upcoming changes mean for people who may still want a fall COVID-19 shot but don't clearly fit into one of the categories.

"Is the pharmacist going to determine if you're in a high-risk group?" asked Dr. Paul Offit, a vaccine expert at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. "The only thing that can come of this will make vaccines less insurable and less available."

The nation's leading pediatrics group said FDA's approach will limit options for parents and their children.

"If the vaccine were no longer available or covered by insurance, it will take the choice away from families who wish to protect their children from COVID-19, especially among families already facing barriers to care," said Dr. Sean O'Leary of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

# Musk to Cut Spending On Political Campaigns

WASHINGTON (AP) — Elon Musk, the richest person in the world and a key financial supporter of President Donald Trump, said today that he'll be spending "a lot less" on political campaigns, a reversal that could be a setback for Republicans ahead of next year's midterm elections.

Musk disclosed his decision via videoconference during a Bloomberg forum in Doha, Qatar. It speaks to his possible disenchantment with politics after his tumultuous tenure as Trump's pick to lead the newly created Department of Government Efficiency, which has fallen far short of its goals for reducing federal spending. Musk has scaled back his government role to spend more time at his businesses, including Tesla, which have seen intense blowback. Tesla reported a big drop in profits in the first quarter.

"In terms of political spending I'm going to do a lot less in the future," Musk said. Asked why, he responded that "I think I've done enough."

Musk's statement marks a reversal

of the course he had set during the 2024 campaign — when he was among the very top political spenders — and immediately after.

Musk spent at least \$250 million supporting Trump in the presidential campaign, as the main contributor to America PAC, a super PAC that was active in advertising and funding door-to-door canvassing groups across the seven most-competitive states in the November presidential election.

Musk relished in the publicity, campaigning alongside Trump at times and headlining some of his own campaign rallies on the GOP nominee's behalf.

And while he took credit for helping Trump return to the White House, Musk suffered a public defeat in April, after he became deeply involved in a Wisconsin Supreme Court campaign. Musk-backed groups America PAC and Rebuilding America's Future spent more than \$21 million on the April 1 election in support of the Republican-backed candidate Brad Schimel.



Sitka School District students learn boat safety at an AMSEA safety fair at Crescent Harbor in 2019. (Sentinel Photo by James Poulson)

# AMSEA...

Continued from Front Page

it? We can apply for other grants, but not for commercial fishing... There really isn't funding to apply for for the commercial sector, because it's supposed to be filled by that... congressionally appropriated funding."

AMSEA is working with Alaska's Congressional delegation and HHS Sec. Kennedy to have the funding restored.

Cyr joined individual fishermen, businesses and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in a letter to Kennedy. "From a financial perspective, the return on investment on this funding annually is millions of dollars to one dollar spent," they said. "The proven reduction in fatalities, injuries, and vessel disasters from marine safety training and research saves the USCG millions annually in expensive rescue operations and saves the U.S. millions in other expenses for work related injury and death.

"The remarkable success of NIOSH commercial fishing safety programs was made possible through decades of hard work, partnerships, and development of programs between the USCG, NIOSH, commercial fishing

organizations, and commercial fishing safety and health training and research centers," Cyr wrote in the letter.

For now, Cyr said, the lack of Coast Guard-mandated safety training will likely leave some fishermen high and dry.

"A lot of fishermen, especially in Sitka, have taken our training and they legally can fish but yes, people take our training all the time because they need to, because they're required to," Cyr said. "Yes, it will affect many fishermen and make them either out of compliance, they could get into really big trouble, or they're waiting at the dock, basically, unable to fish until they take the class."

In the absence of NIOSH funds, she said AMSEA will continue working to provide training, but the lack of money will limit the scale.

"We would probably have a couple classes, where we had local instructors and communities, and we can make it really, really affordable, but it would really affect our commercial fishing safety program, which really needs it the most, because it's such a high risk industry."

# U.S. Begins Deporting Migrants To S. Sudan?

By LINDSAY WHITEHURST Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration appears to have begun deporting people from Myanmar and Vietnam to South Sudan despite a court order restricting removals to other countries, attorneys for the migrants said in court documents.

Immigration authorities may have sent up to a dozen people from several countries to Africa, they told a judge.

Those removals would violate a court order saying people must get a "meaningful opportunity" to argue that sending them to a country outside their homeland would threaten their safety, attorneys said.

The apparent removal of one man from Myanmar was confirmed in an email from an immigration official in Texas, according to court documents. He was informed only in English, a language he does not speak well, and his attorneys learned of the plan hours before his deportation flight, they said.

A woman also reported that her husband from Vietnam and up to 10 other people were flown to Africa Tuesday morning, attorneys from the National Immigration Litigation Alliance wrote.

They asked Judge Brian E. Murphy for an emergency court order to prevent the deportations. Murphy, who was appointed by President Joe Biden, previously found that any plans to deport people to Libya without notice would "clearly" violate his ruling, which also applies to people who have otherwise exhausted their legal appeals. A hearing in the case is set for Wednesday.

The Department of Homeland Security and the White House did not immediately return messages seeking comment.

# Himschoot...

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In recent years, the governor has approved one-time \$680 increases above the base student allocation, which has not seen any major increase since 2016. Today's override of the veto of HB57 is for a \$700 increase to the base student allocation, and is especially significant because it was approved as a permanent increase in the allocation.

"And we've never funded less than the statutory BSA in the history of the state," Stedman said, adding, "We have some policy work that's included in this bill, there's more work to be done, but there's clearly policy issues there, one of which is a report to us on class sizes for all the districts. There's a whole list."

He said the fact that the Legislature has never funded below the statutory BSA should give districts a "floor," or minimum, for what appropriation to expect from the state as they draw up their budgets in the years ahead.

"They have to account for their population change, and there are multipliers," he said. "No matter what the

governor does with the (state) budget, the policy discussions will continue in the next year and the year after, but it's an incremental improvement."

Himschoot was pleased to see the permanent BSA increase go through after the governor vetoed three previous school funding bills, including this one, this year.

"Each of these represented months of negotiation and compromise by the Legislature, often with representatives from the governor's office," Himschoot said.

Putting the BSA increase into historic perspective, she noted that this year's graduating high school seniors were in third grade the last time a permanent raise to the BSA was approved.

"It should not be this difficult to provide basic funding to our public schools, including charter, correspondence and neighborhood schools," Himschoot said. "The override vote today is an important message to our students, teachers and families; the Legislature is broadly committed to supporting our schools."

# Ukraine EU Allies Hit Russia With Sanctions

By ILLIA NOVIKOV and YEHOOR KONOVALOV Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Kyiv's European allies slapped new sanctions today on Moscow, a day after a phone call between U.S. President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin failed to produce a breakthrough on ending the 3-year-old war in Ukraine.

"We have made clear again and again that we simply expect one thing from Russia now: namely, a ceasefire, unconditional and immediate," German Foreign Minister Johann Wadepuhl said in addressing the sanctions. "We welcome the fact that Ukraine is still prepared to do this. We note with disappointment that Russia has not yet taken this decisive step, and we will have to react to this."

Diplomatic efforts have seen little progress in halting the fighting, including Monday's phone call between Trump and Putin, and Friday's direct talks between Russian and Ukrainian delegations in Istanbul. In the phone call, Putin promised Trump that Russia is "ready to work with" Ukraine on a "memorandum" outlining the framework for "a possible future peace treaty."

"It appears that Putin has devised a way to offer Trump an interim, tangible outcome from Washington's peace efforts without making any real concessions," said Tatiana Stanovaya, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Russia

Eurasia Center, in a post on X. Russian media struck a triumphal tone in reporting Putin's conversation with Trump.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on his Telegram channel that "it is obvious that Russia is trying to buy time to continue the war and occupation. We are working with partners to put pressure on the Russians to behave differently."

The new European Union sanctions targeted almost 200 ships from Russia's "shadow fleet" illicitly transporting oil to skirt Western restrictions. It also imposed asset freezes and travel bans on several officials as well as on a number of Russian companies.

Ukrainian officials have said about 500 aging ships of uncertain ownership and safety practices are dodging sanctions and keeping oil revenues flowing to Moscow.

The U.K. also targeted the shadow fleet with 100 new sanctions and also aimed at disrupting the supply chains of Russian weapons, officials said.

"Putin's latest strikes once again show his true colors as a warmonger," British Foreign Secretary David Lammy said.

But Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova said today: "Russia never responds to ultimatums."

Trump has threatened to step up sanctions and tariffs on Russia but hasn't acted so far.

# Override...

Continued from Front Page

improve students' reading performance, and expands career and technical training programs.

It also sets up a legislative task force to recommend further changes to education policy.

Rep. Ted Eischeid, D-Anchorage, said he was listening to his constituents when he voted to override the veto.

"I'm super pleased. The No. 1 issue in House District 22 was education. I know because I asked (at) a thousand doors, where people answered the door, and that was the overwhelming request," he said. "So I'm really happy to stand with my neighbors in House District 22, and I'm super pleased."

How it happened

The House and Senate are controlled by coalition majorities that include Republicans and Democrats, with the House majority also including independents. However, because overriding the governor required 40 votes, some conservative Republicans in the House and Senate minority caucuses needed to support an override for it to succeed.

House Minority Leader Mia Costello, R-Anchorage, said that while she supports the governor, she split with his position and voted to override the veto. "I've supported the governor in many, many ways. I voted for his bills and priorities — very much a fan of the governor," she said. "We just had a difference of opinion on this one bill."

Senate Majority Leader Cathy Giessel, R-Anchorage, praised what she described as the courage of minority Republicans who acted against a governor whose actions they normally support.

"I think it represents a lot of courage on the part of all the legislators, recognizing the justice, the compassion that we need to show to the public," she said. "They've asked for this education funding now for several years, and it's time we act. And I think it represents a really courageous vote for many of them."

During Tuesday's vote, Rep. Jeremy Bynum, R-Ketchikan and a member of the House minority, wore what he called his "hard vote" tie, decorated with small rhinoceroses. He voted to override.

"My vote isn't against the governor, it's for my district," he said. "This is basically the same funding that the governor authorized in last year's budget (and) we got some policy for it. We've worked hard on that."

Dunleavy said he wanted additional policy changes in the bill, including open-enrollment provisions that would allow students to more easily transfer between schools and school districts. Anchorage and the Matanuska-Susitna Borough already offer versions of those policies.

Bynum said he believes that some of the policy priorities sought by the governor need more discussion.

"The problem that we have is that the policies that the governor was asking for us to include in this bill really requires some additional thought," he said. "There's some unintended consequences of that language that could harm some of the lottery schools and some of the charter schools even in Anchorage ... and so, yeah, if we want local control, we need to support local control. I believe in local control."

House and Senate passed HB 57 by a combined vote of 48-11-1; Reps. Jubilee Underwood, R-Wasilla; Elexie Moore, R-Wasilla; and Sarah Vance, R-Homer, voted in favor of HB 57 but against overriding the governor's veto.

Afterward, Underwood and Moore each said they were trying to follow the will of their constituents.

Vance explained her decision in depth.

"I made a decision a couple weeks

ago not to override, seeing that the majority was not even considering giving the governor his policy requests — and really what Republicans have been wanting for quite some time: to make education more accessible to all public school students," she said.

Vance said she is also focused on the state's finances: "I'm also very, very concerned about our budget. We are in a deficit of \$200 million, and that's also the increase right now. I want to fund inside the formula, but right now, I think we're just in a bind on what we can do."

Tuesday's vote may be the first chapter in a longer struggle between the governor and the Legislature.

HB 57 increases the state's public school funding formula, but that formula is subject to the annual state budget. To use an analogy: If the formula is a bucket, the budget fills that bucket.

Dunleavy has previously said he may veto some education money from the state budget, leaving the formula only partially funded.

In addition, parts of HB 57 are contingent upon the enactment of Senate Bill 113, a bill adjusting the state's corporate income taxes. On Monday, Dunleavy implied that he will veto SB 113.

Overriding either a funding veto or a veto of SB 113 would require 45 votes; the state constitution sets a higher threshold to override bills that appropriate money, which a provision of SB 113 would effectively do.

Outcomes of future key votes remain uncertain

Some legislators who voted to override the governor on Monday declined to confirm that they would override vetoes on the two funding mechanisms.

Sen. Robert Yundt, R-Wasilla, and Sen. Mike Cronk, R-Tok, each voted to override but said they didn't know how they would vote if the governor vetoed the funding mechanisms.

Yundt added that he'd like to see less division between the legislative and executive branches.

"This is a sad day for me, I'm sorry it came to this," he said. "People send us here to work together, right? I don't want to see divide ever. So, yeah, I don't ever want to see any more vetoes. ... They're part of the process, and I know that. But for me this is not a time to rejoice."

Asked whether the 46-vote threshold would hold up in subsequent vetoes, the leaders of the House and Senate said they weren't sure.

"We don't know, but the vote today is going to influence the political dynamic around doing what's right for our schools," Edgmon said.

Stevens offered similar thoughts. "I think there's a good, solid message to the governor that we need to move ahead on education," he said.

Regardless of how they stood on HB 57, legislators said that Tuesday's action was significant. The Legislature hasn't overridden a governor's veto since 2009, when it voted to overturn Gov. Sarah Palin's rejection of some federal aid during the Great Recession.

But by the time of that override, Palin had resigned, and legislators didn't risk retribution for their override. Legislators haven't overruled a sitting governor since a Republican-controlled Legislature overrode Democratic Gov. Tony Knowles in 2002.

Former Rep. Joe Hayes, D-Fairbanks, is now an aide to Sen. Scott Kawasaki, D-Fairbanks, and was in the House during the 2002 vote. He represented a swing district and joined Republicans in voting to override.

"Knowles was pissed at me. He was pissed at me forever," Hayes said on Tuesday. "I get it now — this kind of thing doesn't happen very often."

<https://alaskabeacon.com/james-brooks>



For sale, five bedroom three bath house. House sits on one of four lots. E-mail Eric at fvquicksilver@yahoo.com