

Quarterly Issues List for WZLO
January 1st through March 31st, 2024

The following report identifies this quarter's issues as:

- LEWISTON MASS SHOOTING
 - This year a commission was established to investigate the events leading up to the Lewiston Mass Shooting and the police response. Legislation has also been introduced to prevent tragedies from like this from occurring in the future. We've reported extensively on this topic.
- JANUARY STORM
 - Following December's deadly storm, Mainers had to contend with a similar storm system in January. Like the first, the damage was extensive. Our newsroom covered the aftermath of these back-to-back weather events, including relief funding for homeowners and small businesses trying to make repairs.
- TRANS/ABORTION RIGHTS
 - 22 states have approved laws banning gender-affirming care, while 21 have banned or limited abortion rights since Roe V. Wade was overturned in 2022. In response, legislation has been introduced in Maine to protect women and transgender patients who travel to the state for medical care, as well as the medical providers that treat them.
- ILLEGAL MARIJUANA OPERATIONS
 - Maine law enforcement says they can't keep up with the estimated 270 illegal marijuana growing operations that have popped up across the State. We've reported on an extensive list of busts. The Maine P-U-C is also considering a rule change that would make it easier for utility companies to report abnormally high-electricity usage to authorities in an attempt to curtail these illicit operations.
- INSURRECTION CLAUSE
 - Maine Secretary of State Shenna Bellows made national headlines in late-December when she ruled that Donald Trump would be ineligible for the state's primary ballot due to engaging in insurrection (thus violating Section 3 of the 14th Amendment). We reported on the appeal of that ruling to the U.S. Supreme Court, its ultimate overturning, and an attempt to impeach Bellows.

WZLO, Bangor, ME, airs local newscasts **Monday-Friday at the top of every hour between 6am and 8am. Afternoon newscasts are aired at 12pm.** The following news scripts are aired on the following dates, but **the times they're read are at the total discretion of the anchor.** This listing is by no means exhaustive, and the order in which the issues appear does not reflect any priority or significance.

FORMER PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP IS QUIETLY CONTINUING HIS COURT FIGHT AGAINST MAINE'S SECRETARY OF STATE. THE U.S. SUPREME COURT HANDED TRUMP A VICTORY EARLIER THIS MONTH BY OVERTURNING STATE DECISIONS TO KEEP HIM OFF PRIMARY BALLOTS IN MAINE, COLORADO, AND ILLINOIS. ACCORDING TO THE BANGOR DAILY NEWS, TRUMP WANTS MAINE SECRETARY OF STATE SHENNA BELLOWS TO WITHDRAW THE ENTIRETY OF HER DECEMBER 28TH DECISION THAT FOUND HE ENGAGED IN INSURRECTION (THUS VIOLATING SECTION 3 OF THE 14TH AMENDMENT), AND NOT JUST THE PART THAT RESPONDED TO THE HIGH COURT'S RULING THAT CONGRESS, NOT STATES, CAN ENFORCE THE INSURRECTION CLAUSE. TRUMP IS FACING A NUMBER OF PENDING CRIMINAL AND CIVIL CASES, INCLUDING A FEDERAL INDICTMENT FOR ELECTION INTERFERENCE TIED TO HIS 2020 DEFEAT AND THE CAPITOL RIOTS. LEGAL EXPERTS TELL THE B-D-N THAT TRUMP'S LEGAL FIGHT IN MAINE APPEARS TO BE MORE ABOUT POLITICS RATHER THAN FEARS OF FUTURE COURTS CITING BELLOWS' RULING.

THE SOMERSET COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE HAS EXECUTED 10 SEARCH WARRANTS WITHIN THE PAST 2 MONTHS AS PART OF AN ONGOING INVESTIGATION INTO ILLEGAL CULTIVATION OF MARIJUANA IN SOMERSET COUNTY. ON MONDAY, MORE THAN 550 MARIJUANA PLANTS AND DRUG RELATED PARAPHERNALIA WERE SEIZED FROM A HOME ON THURSTON HILL ROAD IN MADISON. A WEEK EARLIER AUTHORITIES SEIZED MORE THAN 350 MARIJUANA PLANTS AND 3 POUNDS OF PROCESSED MARIJUANA FROM A HOME ON PERKINS STREET IN NORRIDGEWOCK. AUTHORITIES SAY NO ONE WAS HOME AT THE TIME. THAT SAME DAY THEY ALSO EXECUTED A SEARCH WARRANT AT A RESIDENCE ON UPPER MAINE STREET, WHERE THEY REPORTEDLY SEIZED OVER 30 POUNDS OF MARIJUANA, MORE THAN 39-THOUSAND DOLLARS IN CASH, AND AN S-U-V. 29-YEAR OLD JIAMIN LIAO WAS ARRESTED AND CHARGED WITH CULTIVATION OF MARIJUANA AND UNLAWFUL TRAFFICKING IN SCHEDULED DRUGS. SHE POSTED BAIL ON TUESDAY.

THE INTERIM REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION INVESTIGATING MAINE'S DEADLIEST MASS SHOOTING FOCUSED MOSTLY ON WHETHER AUTHORITIES SHOULD HAVE TAKEN SHOOTER ROBERT CARD INTO CUSTODY AND SEIZED HIS GUNS UNDER THE STATE'S SO-CALLED YELLOW FLAG LAW. THE COMMISSION SAID THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE SHOULD HAVE INITIATED THAT PROCESS. BUT IT ALSO SAID AUTHORITIES HAD MORE THAN ENOUGH INFORMATION TO PURSUE ASSAULT CHARGES AGAINST CARD FOR PUNCHING A FELLOW ARMY RESERVIST IN THE FACE SIX WEEKS BEFORE HE KILLED 18 PEOPLE IN LEWISTON. THE COMMISSION SAID CARD COULD HAVE BEEN ARRESTED AND A PROSECUTOR COULD HAVE REQUESTED BAIL CONDITIONS THAT PROHIBITED THE POSSESSION OF FIREARMS. LEGAL EXPERTS AND THE MAN CARD PUNCHED AGREE, THOUGH THEY SAY DOING SO MIGHT NOT HAVE PREVENTED THE SHOOTINGS.

A WORK SESSION WAS HELD IN AUGUSTA THURSDAY FOR A BILL THAT WOULD PROTECT TRANSGENDER PATIENTS TRAVELING TO THE STATE FOR MEDICAL CARE AS WELL AS THE MEDICAL PROVIDERS THAT TREAT THEM. L-D 227 WOULD ALSO PROTECT PATIENTS AND HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS IN MAINE WHO PERFORM ABORTIONS OR PROVIDE IN-VITRO FERTILIZATION, WHICH IS NOW ILLEGAL IN OTHER STATES. JUST LAST WEEK ATTORNEY GENERALS FROM 15 OTHER STATES SENT A LETTER TO GOVERNOR JANET MILLS, ATTORNEY GENERAL AARON FREY, THE SENATE PRESIDENT ,AND MAINE'S HOUSE SPEAKER THREATENING TO SUE THE STATE IF THE BILL BECOMES LAW. THE PROPOSAL PASSED THE COMMITTEE AND WILL NOW HEAD TO THE LEGISLATURE.

THE MAINE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION IS HOLDING ANOTHER PUBLIC HEARING THIS WEEK ON VERSANT POWER'S DISTRIBUTION RATE INCREASE REQUEST. TODAY'S MEETING WILL BE HELD AT NORTHERN MAINE COMMUNITY COLLEGE IN PRESQUE ISLE AT 4PM. ACCORDING TO THE MAINE P-U-C, YOU CAN TAKE PART IN THE HEARINGS EITHER IN-PERSON OR REMOTELY. VERSANT SAYS THEY NEED MONEY FOR INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS, STORM RECOVERY COSTS, AND INVESTMENTS IN TECHNOLOGY. VERSANT ESTIMATES THE PROPOSED INCREASE WOULD AMOUNT TO APPROXIMATELY \$12 A MONTH FOR THE TYPICAL RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMER. IF APPROVED, THE COMMISSION SAYS THE NEW RATES WOULD GO INTO EFFECT ON APRIL 1ST, 2025. FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT "MAINE (DOT) GOV (SLASH) M-P-U-C".

DISASTER

3/21

PA

PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN HAS APPROVED THE STATE'S REQUEST FOR A MAJOR DISASTER DECLARATION FOR JANUARY'S STORMS. ACCORDING TO GOVERNOR JANET MILLS, THE DECLARATION WILL HELP EIGHT COASTAL COUNTIES RECOVER FROM THE BACK-TO-BACK STORMS THAT BROUGHT FLOODING AND OTHER DAMAGE TO THE REGION.

ACCORDING TO TV5, THE APPROVAL UNLOCKS FEDERAL ASSISTANCE FOR BOTH PUBLIC AND INDIVIDUAL REPAIRS IN WASHINGTON, HANCOCK, WALDO, KNOX, LINCOLN, SAGADAHOC, CUMBERLAND, AND YORK COUNTIES. FEMA, MEMA, AND OTHER STATE AGENCIES WILL BEGIN ESTABLISHING DISASTER RECOVERY CENTERS IN THE COMING WEEKS.

A SAGADAHOC COUNTY SERGEANT WHO HAS BEEN CRITICIZED FOR HIS HANDLING OF A REPORT ABOUT A MAN WHO WOULD LATER CARRY OUT THE LEWISTON MASS SHOOTING IS RUNNING FOR SHERIFF. STATE RECORDS SHOW THAT SERGEANT AARON SKOLFIELD IS RUNNING AS A REPUBLICAN AGAINST HIS BOSS, DEMOCRATIC SHERIFF JOEL MERRY. SKOLFIELD WAS CRITICIZED IN A REPORT LAST WEEK FROM A COMMISSION THAT LOOKED INTO EVENTS PRECEDING THE DEADLIEST MASS SHOOTING IN MAINE HISTORY. ON OCTOBER 25TH, ROBERT CARD KILLED 18 PEOPLE IN A BOWLING ALLEY AND A RESTAURANT IN LEWISTON. FIVE WEEKS EARLIER, SKOLFIELD RESPONDED TO A CALL THAT CARD WAS HAVING A MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS.

A NEW EMERGENCY LAW, SIGNED BY GOVERNOR JANET MILLS LAST WEEK, IS EASING PERMIT REQUIREMENTS TO HELP SPEED UP STORM RECOVERY EFFORTS ALONG MAINE'S COAST. L-D 2030 ALLOWS PIERS AND WHARVES TO BE BUILT FOUR FEET TALLER THAN PREVIOUS INFRASTRUCTURE WITHOUT NEEDING TO START THE ENTIRE PERMITTING PROCESS FROM SQUARE ONE. PEOPLE CAN APPLY FOR A "PERMIT-BY-RULE", WHICH ALLOWS THE APPLICANT TO BEGIN WORK AFTER A 14-DAY REVIEW PROCESS BY THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION. PRIOR TO THE NEW LAW, THE PERMITTING PROCESS OF BUILDING A HIGHER WHARF OR PIER COULD TAKE MONTHS.

THE FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY'S DISASTER RECOVERY CENTERS WILL BE CLOSING ACROSS MAINE THIS WEEK. THE CENTERS WERE OPENED TO HELP MAINERS, IMPACTED BY THE DECEMBER STORM, LEARN ABOUT AND APPLY FOR ASSISTANCE. ACCORDING TO TV5, THE CENTER IN FARMINGDALE WILL CLOSE ON WEDNESDAY AT 5PM. THE LEWISTON CENTER WILL CLOSE AT THE SAME TIME ON THURSDAY, WHILE THE CENTERS IN SKOWHEGAN AND FARMINGTON WILL CLOSE AT 5 PM ON SATURDAY. FEMA SAYS BUSINESSES AND INDIVIDUALS FROM COUNTIES AFFECTED BY THE STORM HAVE UNTIL APRIL 1ST TO APPLY FOR ASSISTANCE. YOU CAN VISIT "DISASTER ASSISTANCE (DOT) GOV" OR DOWNLOAD THE FEMA APP.

THE CITY OF LEWISTON AND THE LEWISTON-AUBURN METROPOLITAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE HAVE ANNOUNCED A FUND DEDICATED TO SUPPORTING THE CREATION OF A MEMORIAL FOR THE VICTIM'S OF OCTOBER'S MASS SHOOTINGS. ACCORDING TO TV5, THE "ONE LEWISTON RESILIENCE FUND" WILL ALSO SUPPORT THE CREATION OF EVENTS AIMED AT UNIFYING THE COMMUNITY AND HELPING IT TO MOVE FORWARD. A MEMORIAL PLANNING COMMITTEE WILL BE ESTABLISHED BY THE CITY AND THE CHAMBER, AND WILL BE COMPRISED OF VICTIMS' FAMILIES, SURVIVORS, THE DEAF COMMUNITY, NONPROFIT PARTNERS, LOCAL BUSINESSES, THE CHAMBER, AND CITY OFFICIALS. 18 PEOPLE WERE KILLED AND 13 OTHERS WERE INJURED WHEN A GUNMAN OPENED FIRE AT A BAR AND A RESTAURANT ON OCTOBER 25TH.

THE STATE OF MAINE WILL RECEIVE \$15-MILLION FROM THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO SUPPORT WORKING WATERFRONTS. TV5 REPORTS THE FUNDING COMES AFTER MULTIPLE STORMS DAMAGED INFRASTRUCTURE UP AND DOWN THE MAINE COAST. ACCORDING TO SENATOR SUSAN COLLINS, \$10 MILLION WILL BE USED FOR REPAIRS AND RENOVATIONS IN THOSE AREAS, WHILE THE REST WILL BE USED TO ESTABLISH A PROGRAM FOR WORKING WATERFRONTS AT THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION.

AN INDEPENDENT COMMISSION, INVESTIGATING THE MASS SHOOTING IN LEWISTON THAT LEFT 18 PEOPLE DEAD, ISSUED AN INTERIM REPORT ON FRIDAY THAT FOUND THE SAGADAHOC COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE HAD CAUSE TO TAKE THE KILLER INTO PROTECTIVE CUSTODY AND CONFISCATE HIS GUNS BEFOREHAND. THE COMMISSION CRITICIZED THE SERGEANT WHO RESPONDED TO A REPORT A MONTH BEFORE THE SHOOTING. ARMY RESERVIST ROBERT CARD KILLED 18 PEOPLE IN A BOWLING ALLEY AND A BAR IN LEWISTON ON OCTOBER 25TH. GOVERNOR JANET MILLS AND ATTORNEY GENERAL AARON FREY ASSEMBLED THE COMMISSION TO REVIEW BOTH THE EVENTS LEADING UP TO THE SHOOTING AND THE RESPONSE TO THE TRAGEDY.

SHOULD POWER COMPANIES BE ALLOWED TO ALERT AUTHORITIES IF THEY BELIEVE A CRIME IS BEING COMMITTED? THAT'S THE QUESTION BEING ASKED TO MAINE'S PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION. ACCORDING TO W-M-T-W, AN AVERAGE RESIDENTIAL CONSUMER IN MAINE USES AROUND 525 KILOWATT HOURS PER MONTH. BY COMPARISON, ENERGY CONSUMPTION AT LARGE-SCALE MARIJUANA GROW SITES CAN SURGE TO MORE THAN 3,000-KILOWATT HOURS PER MONTH. AUTHORITIES SAY THESE GROW OPERATIONS USE EXCESSIVE AMOUNTS OF ELECTRICITY FOR LIGHTS AND FANS THAT SOMETIMES RUN 24 HOURS A DAY. MAINE LAW ENFORCEMENT SAY THEY CAN'T KEEP UP WITH THE ESTIMATED 270 ILLEGAL GROW OPERATIONS THAT HAVE POPPED UP ACROSS THE STATE, AND REPORTING HIGH-ELECTRICITY USAGE WOULD GIVE THEM AN ADVANTAGE. THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION SAID FRIDAY ANY POTENTIAL RULE CHANGE REGARDING THIS ISSUE IS STILL MONTHS AWAY.

VOLUNTEERS FROM THE MAINE CHAPTERS OF MOMS DEMAND ACTION AND STUDENTS DEMAND ACTION RALLIED AT THE STATE HOUSE WEDNESDAY IN SUPPORT OF GUN REFORM BILLS THAT ARE BEFORE THE LEGISLATURE. ACCORDING TO TV5, THEY SPOKE IN FAVOR OF SEVERAL BILLS, INTRODUCED IN THE WAKE OF THE LEWISTON MASS SHOOTING, THAT THEY SAY WILL HELP PREVENT FUTURE GUN VIOLENCE. SOME OF THE BILLS BEING DISCUSSED INCLUDE BACKGROUND CHECKS FOR PRIVATE GUN SALES, A 72-HOUR WAITING PERIOD AFTER PURCHASING A GUN, AND A BAN ON BUMP STOCKS.

MAINE LAWMAKERS HEARD ARGUMENTS TUESDAY ON A BILL THAT WOULD SHIELD MAINE'S HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS FROM LAWS IN OTHER STATES THAT BAN OR LIMIT ABORTIONS OR GENDER-AFFIRMING CARE. ACCORDING TO THE KENNEBEC JOURNAL, L-D 227 SEEKS TO PROTECT HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS FROM SUBPOENAS OR WARRANTS, HEALTH RECORDS REQUESTS, EXTRADITION REQUESTS AND OTHER CIVIL OR CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS IF THEY PROVIDE CARE THAT HAS BEEN BANNED IN A PATIENT'S HOME STATE. IF APPROVED, MAINE WOULD JOIN 17 STATES AND WASHINGTON, D.C., IN PASSING LAWS SHIELDING HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS. 22 STATES HAVE APPROVED LAWS BANNING GENDER-AFFIRMING CARE, WHILE 21 HAVE BANNED OR LIMITED ABORTION RIGHTS SINCE ROE V. WADE WAS OVERTURNED BY THE SUPREME COURT IN 2022.

THE FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY IS GRANTING FUNDS FOR DAMAGES SUSTAINED DURING THE SEVERE WEATHER IN DECEMBER. ONE MONTH AFTER PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN ISSUED A DISASTER DECLARATION FOR THE STATE, MORE THAN \$3.6 MILLION IN GRANTS HAVE BEEN APPROVED TO HELP WITH COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH HOUSING AND HOME REPAIR, PERSONAL PROPERTY LOSS, AND LOAN ASSISTANCE FOR SMALL BUSINESSES AFFECTED BY THE STORMS. APPLICATIONS ARE STILL BEING ACCEPTED UNTIL APRIL 1ST.

HOUSE DEMOCRATS RALLIED AT THE STATE HOUSE ON TUESDAY TO INTRODUCE NEW BILLS TARGETED AT BOTH GUN SAFETY REFORM AND PUBLIC HEALTH. ACCORDING TO TV5, THE LAWMAKERS WERE JOINED BY THOSE AFFECTED IN THE LEWISTON SHOOTING, AS WELL AS A SUICIDE PREVENTION EXPERT. ACCORDING TO THE MAINE CHAPTER OF THE NATIONAL ALLIANCE ON MENTAL ILLNESS, NEARLY 90% OF FIREARM DEATHS IN THE STATE IN 2021 WERE SUICIDES. TV5 REPORTS THE PROPOSED MEASURES TO PROMOTE GUN SAFETY INCLUDE 72-HOUR WAITING PERIODS, EXPANDED BACKGROUND CHECKS AND YELLOW FLAG LAWS, AND WHAT'S CALLED THE "GUN SHOP PROJECT," A NOTIFICATION SYSTEM THAT ALLOWS GUN SHOP OWNERS TO COMMUNICATE IF A POTENTIAL BUYER RAISES SUSPICION.

MAINE VOTERS TURNED OUT THE POLLS YESTERDAY AS PART OF SUPER TUESDAY. PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN AND FORMER PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP EACH WON THEIR RESPECTIVE PRIMARY RACES. IN ORONO, VOTERS APPROVED CHANGES TO THE TOWN CHARTER TO PUSH THEIR ANNUAL MUNICIPAL ELECTION FROM MARCH TO NOVEMBER. AND IN A SPECIAL ELECTION IN SOUTH PORTLAND, DEMOCRAT MATTHEW BECK WON THE RACE TO SUCCEED THE LATE REPRESENTATIVE LOIS GALGAY RECKITT.

THE SURVIVORS OF A MASS SHOOTING IN LEWISTON CALLED ON POLITICIANS MONDAY TO PROTECT THE COMMUNITY FROM FUTURE TRAGEDIES. THE TESTIMONY CAME DURING A HEARING BY A COMMISSION REVIEWING THE FACTS AND EVIDENCE SURROUNDING THE OCTOBER 25TH SHOOTINGS THAT LEFT 18 PEOPLE DEAD AT A BOWLING ALLEY AND A RESTAURANT IN LEWISTON. THE PANEL IS ALSO REVIEWING THE POLICE RESPONSE TO THE SHOOTINGS. VICTIMS AND FAMILY MEMBERS ON MONDAY SAID AUTHORITIES HAD A CHANCE — BUT FAILED — TO REMOVE GUNS FROM 40-YEAR-OLD ARMY RESERVIST ROBERT CARD BEFORE THE RAMPAGE. HE LATER SHOT AND KILLED HIMSELF.

A REPUBLICAN LAWMAKER IS ONCE AGAIN TRYING TO IMPEACH MAINE SECRETARY OF STATE SHENNA BELLOWS AFTER THE U.S. SUPREME COURT REVERSED HER DECISION TO DISQUALIFY FORMER PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP FROM THE REPUBLICAN PRIMARY. ACCORDING TO THE BANGOR DAILY NEWS, REPRESENTATIVE JOHN ANDREWS OF PARIS CITED MONDAY'S UNANIMOUS SUPREME COURT DECISION IN A CASE STEMMING FROM COLORADO'S HIGH COURT, ALONG WITH BELLOWS, AND AN ILLINOIS JUDGE, DISQUALIFYING TRUMP FOR VIOLATING THE 14TH AMENDMENT'S BAN ON ENGAGING IN INSURRECTION. BELLOWS REVERSED HER DECEMBER DECISION FOLLOWING MONDAY'S SUPREME COURT OPINION. LIKE THE FIRST IMPEACHMENT ATTEMPT (WHICH FAILED IN JANUARY), THE SECOND FACES LONG ODDS AS WELL. BELLOWS IS A STALWART AND INFLUENTIAL DEMOCRAT WHOSE PARTY HOLDS FIRM CONTROL OVER BOTH LEGISLATIVE HOUSES.

THREE PEOPLE ARE FACING DRUG CHARGES FOLLOWING THE RAID OF AN ILLEGAL MARIJUANA GROW SITE IN SKOWHEGAN. THE SOMERSET COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE SAYS A SEARCH WARRANT WAS ISSUED AT THE HOME ON WATERVILLE ROAD FRIDAY MORNING. INSIDE, OFFICIALS SAY THEY FOUND NEARLY 48-HUNDRED MARIJUANA PLANTS, WORTH MORE THAN \$7-THOUSAND. TV5 REPORTS, THREE PEOPLE, ALL FROM BROOKLYN, NEW YORK WERE ARRESTED AND CHARGED WITH DRUG TRAFFICKING AND CULTIVATION OF MARIJUANA. THEY'RE EACH BEING HELD AT THE SOMERSET COUNTY JAIL ON \$10-THOUSAND BAIL.

THE COMMISSION CONDUCTING AN INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION OF THE OCTOBER 25TH SHOOTINGS IN LEWISTON WILL HEAR DIRECTLY FROM THOSE MOST SIGNIFICANTLY IMPACTED TODAY. AT 9AM, THE COMMISSION IS SET TO HOST A PUBLIC MEETING AT LEWISTON'S CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, DURING WHICH THEY WILL HEAR FROM THE VICTIMS AND THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS. THE COMMISSION'S MOST RECENT MEETING WAS ON FEBRUARY 15TH, DURING WHICH MAINE STATE POLICE TESTIFIED ON THEIR OWN INVOLVEMENT AND PROCESS DURING THE THREE-DAY SEARCH FOR THE SHOOTER.

THE SOMERSET COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE HAS FOUND ANOTHER ILLEGAL MARIJUANA GROWING OPERATION IN THE TOWN MADISON, THE SECOND IN LESS THAN A WEEK. OFFICIALS SAY A SEARCH OF A HOME ON FOSS ROAD MONDAY MORNING TURNED UP NEARLY 450 LIVE MARIJUANA PLANTS, OVER 50 POUNDS OF PROCESSED MARIJUANA, AND OTHER DRUG PARAPHERNALIA. A NEGLECTED DOG THAT WAS FOUND AT THE HOME WAS TURNED OVER TO ANIMAL CONTROL. ACCORDING TO TV5, POLICE DID NOT FIND ANYONE IN THE HOME, BUT ONCE THOSE RESPONSIBLE ARE LOCATED, THEY'LL BE CHARGED WITH CULTIVATION OF MARIJUANA AND DRUG TRAFFICKING. THIS IS THE SIXTH ILLEGAL MARIJUANA GROWING OPERATION FOUND IN SOMERSET COUNTY IN THE LAST MONTH.

AN ARMY RESERVIST, RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DEADLIEST SHOOTING IN MAINE HISTORY, REPORTEDLY RECEIVED A GLOWING REVIEW FROM HIS SUPERIORS EVEN AS SOME OF HIS FAMILY MEMBERS WERE GROWING INCREASINGLY WORRIED ABOUT HIS MENTAL HEALTH. THE EVALUATION FROM APRIL 2023 SAYS ROBERT CARD WAS "A CONSUMMATE PROFESSIONAL" WHO "EXCELLED AS A SQUAD LEADER." SIX MONTHS LATER, CARD KILLED 18 PEOPLE IN A MASS SHOOTING AND THEN KILLED HIMSELF. SEVERAL OF CARD'S FELLOW RESERVISTS ARE DUE TO TESTIFY NEXT WEEK BEFORE AN INDEPENDENT COMMISSION THAT'S INVESTIGATING THE OCTOBER 25TG SHOOTINGS IN LEWISTON.

GOVERNOR JANET MILLS HAS REQUESTED A MAJOR DISASTER DECLARATION FROM PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN FOR DAMAGE CAUSED BY A PAIR OF STORMS IN JANUARY. ACCORDING TO TV5, THE DECLARATION WOULD HELP MAINE'S EIGHT COASTAL COUNTIES RECOVER FROM THE BACK-TO-BACK STORMS THAT BROUGHT SIGNIFICANT FLOODING. MILLS SAYS ITS ESTIMATED THE TWO WEATHER EVENTS CAUSED MORE THAN \$70 MILLION IN PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE DAMAGE.

MARIJUANA ARREST

2/23

PA

XISEN GUO = ZEE-SEN GWO

ONE MAN IS FACING CHARGES AFTER THE PENOBSCOT COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE REPORTEDLY FOUND 40 POUNDS OF ILLEGALLY PROCESSED MARIJUANA IN PASSADUMKEAG. 67-YEAR-OLD XISEN GUO OF NEW YORK WAS ARRESTED FOR UNLAWFUL TRAFFICKING IN SCHEDULED DRUGS. ACCORDING TO TV5, AN EXTENSIVE CULTIVATION FACILITY WAS DISCOVERED THURSDAY DURING A SEARCH OF A HOUSE ON MAIN ROAD. THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE SAYS \$4,700 IN CASH WAS ALSO SEIZED, AS WELL AS A SMALL AMOUNT OF SUSPECTED METH.

THE SOMERSET COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE SAYS IT'S FOUND ANOTHER ILLEGAL MARIJUANA GROWING OPERATION, THIS ONE IN THE TOWN OF MADISON. ACCORDING TO TV5, A SEARCH OF A HOME ON EAST MADISON ROAD TURNED UP NEARLY 1,500 PLANTS AND SEVERAL POUNDS OF HARVESTED MARIJUANA. OFFICIALS SAY THE HOME WAS STRICTLY A GROW HOUSE, AND NOBODY WAS THERE AT THE TIME OF THE SEARCH. THIS IS THE FOURTH ILLEGAL MARIJUANA OPERATION FOUND IN SOMERSET COUNTY THIS MONTH.

THE STATE OF MAINE AND THE FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY HAS OPENED A DISASTER RECOVERY CENTER IN KENNEBEC COUNTY. THE CENTER AT THE MANCHESTER FIRE DEPARTMENT ON READFIELD ROAD AIMS TO HELP MAINERS, IMPACTED BY THE DECEMBER STORM, LEARN ABOUT AND APPLY FOR ASSISTANCE. THE CENTER WILL BE OPEN THROUGH MARCH 4TH. ACCORDING TO TV5, THERE ARE OTHER DISASTER RECOVERY CENTERS IN FRANKLIN, OXFORD, SOMERSET, AND ANDROSCOGGIN COUNTIES. ALL OF THEM OPERATE FROM 8AM TO 6PM SEVEN DAYS A WEEK, UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.

A GROUP OF MAINE LAWMAKERS ARE CALLING ON CABELA'S IN SCARBOROUGH AND THE KITTELY TRADING POST TO STOP SELLING MILITARY-STYLE, SEMI-AUTOMATIC WEAPONS. ACCORDING TO TV5, FORTY-SEVEN STATE LEGISLATORS HAVE SIGNED ON TO LETTERS THAT WERE SENT TO EACH COMPANY. REPRESENTATIVE LORI GRAMLICH OF OLD ORCHARD BEACH, WHO SPEARHEADED THE EFFORT, SAID IN THE LETTERS, "THE HORRIFIC MASS SHOOTING IN LEWISTON HAS SHOWN ALL OF US THAT MAINE IS NOT IMMUNE FROM THE EPIDEMIC OF GUN VIOLENCE." SHE SAYS EVERYONE HAS THE RESPONSIBILITY TO DO MORE TO PREVENT GUN VIOLENCE IN MAINE.

GOVERNOR JANET MILLS HAS ROLLED OUT LEGISLATION AIMED AT PREVENTING DANGEROUS PEOPLE FROM POSSESSING WEAPONS AND STRENGTHENING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES TO HELP PREVENT FUTURE TRAGEDIES LIKE THE LEWISTON MASS SHOOTING. MILLS CALLED FOR CHANGES IN HER STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESS IN JANUARY, THREE MONTHS AFTER AN ARMY RESERVIST KILLED 18 PEOPLE IN THE WORST MASS SHOOTING IN STATE HISTORY. THE ARMY RESERVIST HAD A HISTORY OF MENTAL ILLNESS AND ERRATIC BEHAVIOR BEFORE THE SHOOTINGS.

LEWISTON POLICE ARE INVESTIGATING AFTER MULTIPLE GUNSHOTS WERE FIRED INTO AN APARTMENT SUNDAY MORNING. OFFICERS WERE CALLED TO THE BUILDING ON PINE STREET JUST BEFORE 5AM.

ACCORDING TO A RELEASE, POLICE LOCATED SHELL CASINGS OUTSIDE, AND INVESTIGATORS BELIEVE THE SUSPECT MAY HAVE FLED IN A VEHICLE. OFFICIALS SAY THE SHOOTING DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE A RANDOM INCIDENT BECAUSE A SPECIFIC APARTMENT WAS TARGETED. POLICE CONTINUE TO INVESTIGATE. ANYONE WITH INFORMATION IS ASKED TO GIVE THEM A CALL.

MAINE STATE POLICE ARE DEFENDING THEIR SEARCH LAST FALL FOR THE GUNMAN WHO KILLED 18 PEOPLE IN LEWISTON, SAYING THEY DIDN'T RUSH TO SEARCH THE WOODS SURROUNDING HIS ABANDONED CAR BECAUSE THEY FEARED AN AMBUSH. IT TOOK POLICE TWO DAYS TO FIND THE BODY OF SHOOTER ROBERT CARD, WHO DIED BY SUICIDE, WHILE TENS OF THOUSANDS OF MAINERS WERE ORDERED TO SHELTER IN THEIR HOMES. POLICE HAVE BEEN CRITICIZED FOR NOT FINDING CARD SOONER. ON THURSDAY, MAJOR LUCAS HARE TOLD A PANEL INVESTIGATING THE SHOOTING THAT HE DECIDED TO DELAY A SEARCH OF THE WOODS AROUND THE CAR BECAUSE THEY'D BEEN TOLD THAT CARD, A FORMER ARMY RESERVIST, MIGHT HAVE A THERMAL SCOPE AND NIGHT-VISION CAPABILITIES.

AFTER TEASING IT IN HER STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESS, GOVERNOR JANET MILLS RELEASED HER PROPOSED SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET ON WEDNESDAY. ACCORDING TO W-L-B-Z, THIS YEAR'S BUDGET OUTLINES MAJOR INVESTMENTS FOR THE STATE'S FOREFRONT ISSUES, SUCH AS THE NEED FOR MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES, PUBLIC SAFETY EXPANSIONS, AND FUNDS TO REBUILD STORM-RAVAGED COASTAL COMMUNITIES. A MAJOR PORTION OF THE BUDGET COMES IN THE WAKE OF OCTOBER'S MASS SHOOTING IN LEWISTON, WITH A PROPOSED ONE-TIME PAYMENT OF MORE THAN \$900-THOUSAND GOING TOWARD CREATING A CRISIS RECEIVING CENTER IN THE CITY.

ONE MAN HAS BEEN ARRESTED AFTER POLICE DISCOVER ANOTHER ILLEGAL MARIJUANA GROWING OPERATION IN NORRIDGEWOCK. THE SOMERSET COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE SAYS A SEARCH OF A HOME ON BETTERMENT ROAD TURNED UP OVER 1,300 MARIJUANA PLANTS AND SEVERAL POUNDS OF HARVESTED MARIJUANA. ACCORDING TO TV5, 26-YEAR-OLD ZUNJIE WU OF BROOKLYN, NEW YORK WAS ARRESTED AND CHARGED WITH CULTIVATION OF MARIJUANA AND TRAFFICKING SCHEDULED DRUGS.

THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION, INVESTIGATING THE DEADLIEST SHOOTING IN MAINE HISTORY, NOW HAS THE POWER TO COMPEL WITNESSES TO TESTIFY OR PRODUCE DOCUMENTS. GOVERNOR JANET MILLS SIGNED BIPARTISAN LEGISLATION TUESDAY GRANTING SUBPOENA POWER TO THE COMMISSION. THE SHOOTER WHO KILLED 18 PEOPLE ON OCTOBER 25TH IN LEWISTON WAS AN ARMY RESERVIST. THE COMMISSION'S DIRECTOR TOLD LAWMAKERS LAST MONTH THAT THE PANEL WAS RUNNING INTO ISSUES GETTING INFORMATION FROM THE ARMY. ACCORDING TO THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, THE ARMY HAS AGREED TO PARTICIPATE IN AN UPCOMING PUBLIC SESSION.

A NEW BILL WOULD SET ASIDE \$50-MILLION FOR SMALL BUSINESSES IN MAINE THAT WERE HURT BY A SERIES OF STORMS IN DECEMBER AND JANUARY. ACCORDING TO THE KENNEBEC JOURNAL, THE BILL'S JOURNEY THROUGH THE LEGISLATURE STARTED TUESDAY WITH A PUBLIC HEARING BEFORE THE INNOVATION, DEVELOPMENT, ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT AND BUSINESS COMMITTEE, ALSO KNOWN AS THE "IDEA COMMITTEE." THE PAPER REPORTS THAT SMALL BUSINESSES, IMPACTED BY "SEVERE WEATHER-RELATED EVENTS" WOULD BE ABLE TO APPLY FOR ONE-TIME PAYMENTS FOR STATE AID. THE COMMITTEE IS CURRENTLY GRAPPLING WITH WHAT KINDS OF BUSINESSES WOULD QUALIFY.

AUTHORITIES SAY THEY'VE FOUND ANOTHER ILLEGAL MARIJUANA GROWING OPERATION -- THIS ONE IN THE TOWN OF MERCER. ON FRIDAY, THE SOMERSET COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE SEARCHED A HOME ON THE ROME ROAD AND FOUND AROUND 550 "MOSTLY MATURE" PLANTS AND SEVERAL POUNDS OF HARVESTED MARIJUANA. THEY SAY THEY ALSO FOUND A CHEMICAL BEING USED IN THE OPERATION THAT'S PROHIBITED IN MAINE. ACCORDING TO TV5, ALL OF THE DRUGS WERE SEIZED, BUT NOBODY WAS THERE AT THE TIME OF THE SEARCH. THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE SAYS ONCE THE INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED ARE LOCATED, THEY'LL BE CHARGED WITH CULTIVATION OF MARIJUANA AND DRUG TRAFFICKING.

ONE OF THE 18 PEOPLE KILLED IN THE DEADLIEST MASS SHOOTING IN MAINE HISTORY IS BEING REMEMBERED IN ART, INCLUDING SOME OF HIS OWN. AN ART EXHIBIT OVER THE WEEKEND PAID TRIBUTE TO PEYTON BREWER-ROSS, A NAVY SHIPBUILDER AND FATHER. IT WAS CURATED BY HIS FIANCÉ, RACHAEL SLOAT, WHO SAID THE ART EXHIBIT SHED A LITTLE LIGHT ON A FUN AND ECLECTIC MAN WHO WAS A HERO TO THEIR DAUGHTER. THE EXHIBIT WAS ENTITLED, "THERE GOES MY HERO. CHAPTER ONE: PEYTON BREWER-ROSS." THE 40-YEAR-OLD WAS PLAYING CORNHOLE WITH FRIENDS WHEN HE WAS GUNNED DOWN ON OCTOBER 25TH IN LEWISTON. ANOTHER 13 PEOPLE WERE INJURED.

POLICE ARE LOOKING FOR THE PEOPLE RESPONSIBLE FOR AN ILLEGAL MARIJUANA OPERATION IN NORRIDGEWOCK. ACCORDING TO TV5, THE SOMERSET COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE SEARCHED A HOME ON RIVERSIDE DRIVE AND FOUND OVER 2,000 MARIJUANA PLANTS, 10 POUNDS OF HARVESTED MARIJUANA, AND OTHER DRUG RELATED MATERIALS. AUTHORITIES SAY EVERYTHING WAS SEIZED BUT NO ONE WAS HOME AT THE TIME. ANYONE WITH INFORMATION IS ASKED TO CALL POLICE.

POLICE WHO TESTIFIED BEFORE AN INDEPENDENT COMMISSION INVESTIGATING THE RESPONSE TO OCTOBER'S MASS SHOOTING IN LEWISTON ACKNOWLEDGED POTENTIAL MISSED OPPORTUNITIES TO END A MANHUNT FOR THE SHOOTER THAT LOCKED DOWN THE COMMUNITY AND TERRIFIED RESIDENTS. GOVERNOR JANET MILLS AND ATTORNEY GENERAL AARON FREY ASSEMBLED THE COMMISSION TO REVIEW THE EVENTS THAT LED UP TO THE SHOOTINGS THAT KILLED 18 PEOPLE AT A BOWLING ALLEY AND A RESTAURANT ON OCTOBER 25TH. THE COMMISSION HAS HEARD FROM OFFICERS WITH THE SAGADAHOC COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE AND HEARD FROM MEMBERS OF THE LEWISTON AND LISBON POLICE DEPARTMENTS ON THURSDAY.

A SPECIAL COMMISSION, ORGANIZED TO INVESTIGATE THE RESPONSE TO THE MASS SHOOTING IN LEWISTON LAST YEAR, IS SET TO HEAR TESTIMONY FROM MORE POLICE OFFICERS. GOVERNOR JANET MILLS AND STATE ATTORNEY GENERAL AARON FREY ASSEMBLED THE COMMISSION TO REVIEW THE EVENTS THAT LED UP TO THE SHOOTINGS THAT KILLED 18 PEOPLE AT A BOWLING ALLEY AND A RESTAURANT ON OCTOBER 25TH. THE COMMISSION HAS HEARD FROM OFFICERS WITH THE SAGADAHOC COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE AND WILL HEAR FROM MEMBERS OF THE LEWISTON AND LISBON POLICE DEPARTMENTS TODAY.

THE MAINE REPUBLICAN PARTY SAYS IT WON'T RECOGNIZE RANKED CHOICE VOTING IN THE MARCH 5TH PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY, PUTTING THEM AT ODDS WITH FORMER PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP'S LAWYERS, WHO ARGUE THAT MAINE'S USE OF "RANKED CHOICE" COULD HELP "PRESERVE THE INTEGRITY OF THE ELECTION" IF HE'S DISQUALIFIED BY THE COURTS. ACCORDING TO THE KENNEBEC JOURNAL, TRUMP HAS APPEALED A RULING BY SECRETARY OF STATE SHENNA BELLOWS THAT HE IS INELIGIBLE FOR THE PRIMARY BALLOT FOR ATTEMPTING TO OVERTURN THE RESULTS OF THE 2020 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION. THAT APPEAL IS ON HOLD WHILE THE U.S. SUPREME COURT CONSIDERS A SIMILAR CASE OUT OF COLORADO. ORAL ARGUMENTS IN THAT CASE WILL TAKE PLACE TOMORROW. THE PAPER REPORTS THAT, DESPITE THEIR OPPOSITION, MAINE'S REPUBLICAN PRIMARY BALLOTS ARE SET UP FOR RANKED CHOICE VOTING, CONSISTENT WITH STATE LAW.

SENATOR ANGUS KING AND CONGRESSMAN JARED GOLDEN ARE LEADING A BIPARTISAN EFFORT TO GET A BRIEFING FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE REGARDING CHINESE-OWNED MARIJUANA FARMS IN MAINE AND ACROSS THE COUNTRY. IN A LETTER TO THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THEY SAY THEY'RE CONCERNED ABOUT THE MARIJUANA OPERATIONS THAT ARE AFFILIATED WITH THE CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY. THE BIPARTISAN GROUP IS SEEKING ANSWERS TO SEVERAL QUESTIONS ABOUT INVESTIGATIVE RESOURCES, THE GROWTH OF THESE FARMS IN STATES WHERE MARIJUANA IS LEGALIZED, AND PROFITS BEING SENT ILLEGALLY BACK TO CHINA. THE LETTER COMES AFTER MULTIPLE ARRESTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE C-C-P AFFILIATED MARIJUANA FARMS.

GOVERNOR JANET MILLS IS URGING MAINERS AND MAINE BUSINESSES, IMPACTED BY DECEMBER'S STORM, TO APPLY FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE. ACCORDING TO TV5, THE FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY AND THE STATE OF MAINE ARE EXPECTED TO ANNOUNCE THE OPENING OF SEVERAL DISASTER RECOVERY CENTERS IN THE COMING DAYS, WHERE IMPACTED MAINERS CAN LEARN ABOUT AND APPLY FOR ASSISTANCE. LOW-INTEREST LOANS ARE ALSO AVAILABLE TO HELP IMPACTED BUSINESSES AND HOMEOWNERS REPAIR OR REPLACE PROPERTY DAMAGE. BUSINESSES COULD ALSO BE ELIGIBLE FOR CAPITAL LOANS.

A PARTY-LINE COMMITTEE VOTE POINTS TO A PARTISAN CHALLENGE FOR DEMOCRATS WHO WANT TO AMEND THE MAINE CONSTITUTION TO ENSHRINE ABORTIONS AS A RIGHT. THE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE VOTED 6-5 THURSDAY IN FAVOR OF THE PROPOSAL WITH ALL DEMOCRATS IN SUPPORT AND ALL REPUBLICANS IN OPPOSITION. DEMOCRATS CONTROL BOTH CHAMBERS OF THE LEGISLATURE BUT LACK BIG-ENOUGH MAJORITIES TO SEND THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO VOTERS UNLESS THEY CONVINCED SOME REPUBLICANS TO VOTE IN FAVOR OF AMENDING THE MAINE CONSTITUTION. MAINE DEMOCRATS ARE SEEKING TO JOIN FOUR OTHER STATES THAT HAVE AMENDED THEIR CONSTITUTIONS TO PROTECT THE RIGHT TO ABORTION SINCE THE U.S. SUPREME COURT OVERTURNED ROE V. WADE IN 2022.

PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN HAS FORMALLY ISSUED A FEDERAL DISASTER DECLARATION FOR MAINE FOR EXTENSIVE DAMAGE CAUSED BY A MASSIVE WIND AND RAINSTORM BACK IN DECEMBER. THE PRESIDENT'S ACTION FREES UP FEDERAL FUNDING TO ASSIST IN REPAIRING PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE DAMAGE IN NINE COUNTIES FROM THE STORM THAT HIT THE WEEK BEFORE CHRISTMAS. THE STORM WAS THE FIRST OF THREE TO HIT MAINE AND KNOCKED OUT ELECTRICITY FOR ABOUT 500,000 HOMES AND BUSINESSES ACROSS THE STATE. FLOODWATERS ROSE TO RECORD LEVELS ON THE KENNEBEC RIVER AND SEVERAL RIVERSIDE COMMUNITIES WERE UNDERWATER.

UPDATE

AN INDEPENDENT COMMISSION, INVESTIGATING THE EVENTS LEADING UP TO THE DEADLIEST MASS SHOOTING IN MAINE HISTORY, IS READY TO HEAR THE HEART-WRENCHING STORIES FROM SOME OF THE FAMILY MEMBERS OF THE VICTIMS. SEVEN FAMILY MEMBERS ARE EXPECTED TO ADDRESS THE PANEL TODAY. EIGHTEEN PEOPLE WERE KILLED AND 13 WERE INJURED WHEN A GUNMAN OPENED FIRE ON OCTOBER 25TH AT A BOWLING ALLEY AND A BAR IN LEWISTON. THE COMMISSION IS TASKED WITH REVIEWING EVENTS LEADING UP TO THE TRAGEDY TO INFORM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES TO AVOID FUTURE TRAGEDIES.

GOVERNOR JANET MILLS IS CALLING FOR STRENGTHENING MAINE'S YELLOW FLAG LAW, BOOSTING BACKGROUND CHECKS FOR PRIVATE GUN SALES, AND BOLSTERING MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS CARE FOLLOWING THE DEADLIEST MASS SHOOTING IN STATE HISTORY. AN ARMY RESERVIST KILLED 18 PEOPLE AND WOUNDED 13 OTHERS IN LEWISTON IN OCTOBER. THREE MONTHS LATER, GOVERNOR MILLS SAID DURING HER STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESS TUESDAY THAT THERE'S BROAD SUPPORT FOR TAKING ACTION TO PREVENT FUTURE TRAGEDIES. THE GOVERNOR ALSO USED HER ANNUAL SPEECH TO ADDRESS STORMS THAT HIT MAINE IN RECENT WEEKS AND CAUSED MILLIONS OF DOLLARS OF DAMAGE.

GOVERNOR JANET MILLS GAVE HER STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESS TUESDAY NIGHT. LEGISLATORS, STATE LEADERS, AND HONORED GUESTS FILLED THE HOUSE CHAMBERS TO HEAR THE ADDRESS. THE GOVERNOR DISCUSSED OCTOBER'S MASS SHOOTINGS IN LEWISTON, CALLING FOR STRONGER YELLOW FLAG LAWS, BACKGROUND CHECKS, AND IMPROVED MENTAL HEALTH CARE. SHE ALSO TALKED ABOUT THE IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE, REFERENCING THE RECENT DEVASTATING STORMS THAT KNOCKED OUT POWER TO HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF MAINERS AND LEFT SEVERE DAMAGE ACROSS THE STATE. THE GOVERNOR PROPOSED BOLSTERING AN INFRASTRUCTURE FUND WITH \$50 MILLION FROM THE STATE'S RECORD-HIGH RAINY DAY FUND, TO ALLOW MAINE COMMUNITIES TO BUILD AND REBUILD INFRASTRUCTURE.

GOVERNOR JANET MILLS SAYS THAT DESPITE RECENT CHALLENGES, INCLUDING THE DEADLIEST MASS SHOOTING IN STATE HISTORY AND COASTAL STORMS THAT CAUSED MILLIONS OF DOLLARS IN DAMAGE, “OUR STATE IS GETTING STRONGER EVERY DAY.” IN THE FIRST PART OF HER STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESS, WHICH WAS DELIVERED IN WRITING TO LAWMAKERS TUESDAY MORNING, MILLS CITED INDIVIDUAL INCOME GROWTH, LOW UNEMPLOYMENT, AND BUSINESS OPENINGS. THE SECOND PART OF HER ADDRESS WAS DELIVERED IN-PERSON TO STATE LAWMAKERS TUESDAY NIGHT. IT FOCUSED ON PUBLIC SAFETY, GUN VIOLENCE, AND RECENT EXTREME WEATHER EVENTS. MILLS’ ANNUAL ADDRESS CAME JUST WEEKS AFTER POWERFUL STORMS RAVAGED COASTAL COMMUNITIES AND THREE MONTHS AFTER AN ARMY RESERVIST KILLED 18 PEOPLE AND WOUNDED 13 OTHERS IN LEWISTON.

A LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE IS CONSIDERING AN EMERGENCY REQUEST TO GRANT POWERS TO A PANEL INVESTIGATING LAST YEAR'S MASS SHOOTING IN LEWISTON. AN INDEPENDENT COMMISSION IS INVESTIGATING THE OCTOBER SHOOTINGS THAT KILLED 18 PEOPLE IN A BOWLING ALLEY AND A RESTAURANT IN THE WORST MASS SHOOTING IN MAINE HISTORY. GOVERNOR JANET MILLS SAYS THE PANEL NEEDS SUBPOENA POWER, IN PART, TO ACCESS THE SHOOTER'S MILITARY RECORDS. THE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY HELD AN EMERGENCY PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE REQUEST ON MONDAY.

LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS SAY MAINE'S YELLOW FLAG LAW, THAT ALLOWS GUNS TO BE CONFISCATED FROM SOMEONE IN A MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS, IS CUMBERSOME AND TIME CONSUMING. THEY AIRED THEIR CONCERNS THURSDAY TO AN INDEPENDENT COMMISSION THAT'S INVESTIGATING OCTOBER'S MASS SHOOTING WHICH AN ARMY RESERVIST KILLED 18 PEOPLE IN LEWISTON. SAGADAHOC COUNTY SHERIFF JOEL MERRY POINTED TO THE DIFFICULTY IN BALANCING PUBLIC SAFETY VERSUS INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS AND SAID THE DEPUTIES WEREN'T IN A POSITION TO TAKE ROBERT CARD INTO PROTECTIVE CUSTODY DESPITE A WARNING THAT HE WAS "GOING TO SNAP AND DO A MASS SHOOTING." CARD, THE GUNMAN, DIED BY SUICIDE FOLLOWING THE SHOOTINGS.

GOVERNOR JANET MILLS AND ATTORNEY GENERAL AARON FREY HAVE INTRODUCED EMERGENCY LEGISLATION TO GRANT SUBPOENA POWER TO THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION INVESTIGATING THE LEWISTON MASS SHOOTING. TV5 REPORTS THE BILL WOULD ALLOW THE COMMISSION TO ISSUE SUBPOENAS FOR DOCUMENTS AND WITNESS TESTIMONY. THE COMMISSION FORMALLY REQUESTED LEGISLATIVE HELP LAST NOVEMBER TO OBTAIN THAT POWER. THE BILL IS COSPONSORED BY THE LEADERS OF BOTH PARTIES IN THE HOUSE AND SENATE. AS EMERGENCY LEGISLATION, IT WOULD GO INTO EFFECT IMMEDIATELY IF PASSED WITH A TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY IN BOTH THE HOUSE AND SENATE.

MAINE'S CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION HAS WRITTEN A LETTER TO THE FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY, IN SUPPORT OF GOVERNOR JANET MILLS' REQUEST TO TREAT TWO STORMS, THAT HIT MAINE EARLIER THIS MONTH, AS A SINGLE DISASTER. THE DELEGATION SAYS TREATING THIS AS A SINGLE EVENT REDUCES THE ADMINISTRATIVE BURDEN ON MUNICIPALITIES AFFECTED BY THE STORM BY ALLOWING ALL ASSESSMENTS TO BE DONE SIMULTANEOUSLY. TV5 REPORTS THE MAINE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY HAS EXTENDED THE DEADLINE TO REPORT DAMAGE TO THE END OF THIS MONTH.

A COMMISSION INVESTIGATING A MASS SHOOTING THAT KILLED 18 PEOPLE IN LEWISTON LAST YEAR IS SCHEDULED TO HEAR FROM THE SAGADAHOC COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT, WHICH HAD CONTACT WITH THE SHOOTER BEFORE HE COMMITTED THE KILLINGS. GOVERNOR JANET MILLS AND ATTORNEY GENERAL AARON FREY ASSEMBLED THE COMMISSION TO REVIEW THE EVENTS THAT LED UP TO THE SHOOTINGS ON OCTOBER 25TH. THEY ARE ALSO TASKED WITH REVIEWING THE POLICE RESPONSE. COMMISSIONERS ARE HOLDING THEIR SECOND MEETING TODAY. IT WILL BE PUBLIC.

MAINE'S TOP COURT IS DECLINING TO WEIGH IN ON FORMER PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP'S BALLOT STATUS, KEEPING INTACT A JUDGE'S DECISION THAT THE U.S. SUPREME COURT MUST FIRST RULE ON A SIMILAR CASE IN COLORADO. SECRETARY OF STATE SHENNA BELLOWS CONCLUDED LAST MONTH THAT TRUMP DIDN'T MEET BALLOT QUALIFICATIONS UNDER THE INSURRECTION CLAUSE IN THE U.S. CONSTITUTION. THE COURT ORDERED BELLOWS TO AWAIT THE OUTCOME BEFORE WITHDRAWING, MODIFYING, OR UPHOLDING HER ORIGINAL DECISION TO KEEP TRUMP OFF THE BALLOT. THE U.S. SUPREME COURT IS HEARING ARGUMENTS ON THE COLORADO CASE ON FEBRUARY 8TH.

THE MAINE CLIMATE COUNCIL MET IN AUGUSTA TUESDAY AFTERNOON. THE SPECIAL MEETING WAS CALLED BY GOVERNOR JANET MILLS IN RESPONSE TO THE EXTREME WEATHER EVENTS THE STATE HAS EXPERIENCED SINCE LAST MONTH. MILLS WAS JOINED BY OFFICIALS FROM A NUMBER OF MAINE MUNICIPALITIES, WHO SHARED THEIR STORIES AND STATISTICS FROM THE STORMS. VERMONT'S AGENCY OF NATURAL RESOURCES WAS ON-HAND, AS WELL AS OFFICIALS FROM THE ISLAND INSTITUTE.

A PROPOSAL TO ENSHRINE THE RIGHT TO AN ABORTION IN THE MAINE CONSTITUTION IS MOVING FORWARD. GOVERNOR JANET MILLS AND OTHER LEADING DEMOCRATS ARE PRESSING TO END FUTURE LEGISLATIVE DEBATE BY AMENDING THE STATE CONSTITUTION. BUT SOME REPUBLICANS CALL IT "POLITICAL THEATER" AND SAY THERE'S NO WAY SUPPORTERS CAN OBTAIN A TWO-THIRDS VOTE IN BOTH CHAMBERS TO SEND IT TO MAINE VOTERS. MAINE COULD JOIN FOUR OTHER STATES THAT HAVE AMENDED THEIR CONSTITUTIONS TO PROTECT THE RIGHT TO ABORTION SINCE THE U.S. SUPREME COURT OVERTURNED ROE V. WADE IN 2022.

FOLLOWING MAINE'S DEADLIEST MASS SHOOTING, THE OWNERS OF THE BOWLING ALLEY AND THE BAR IN LEWISTON WHERE THE GUNMAN KILLED A TOTAL OF 18 PEOPLE WERE CERTAIN THEIR DOORS WERE CLOSED FOR GOOD. YET AS TIME PASSED, JUST-IN-TIME RECREATION CO-OWNER SAMANTHA JURAY AND SCHEMENGEES BAR & GRILLE CO-OWNER KATHY LABEL SAY THEIR THINKING SHIFTED AFTER SUPPORT BUILT FROM THEIR FAMILIES, THE LEWISTON COMMUNITY, AND FROM ACROSS THE COUNTRY. JUST-IN-TIME RECREATION COULD REOPEN IN MARCH OR APRIL. LABEL IS STILL WORKING OUT DETAILS ON WHEN AND WHERE SCHEMENGEES WILL REOPEN.

THE OWNER OF A 55-FOOT TRAWLER THAT WRECKED OFF MAINE'S COAST DURING A POWERFUL STORM, SAYS THE FISHING BOAT CRASHED INTO THE ROCKS AFTER A CREW MEMBER FELL ASLEEP WITH THE AUTOPILOT ENGAGED. THE FOUR CREW MEMBERS ABOARD THE TARA LYNN II WERE RESCUED EARLY SATURDAY, JANUARY 13TH. THE VESSEL WAS PUMMELED DURING THE STORM, AS WINDS GUSTED TO 50 MPH WITH 6-FOOT WAVES CRASHING ASHORE. THE OWNER TOLD MAINE PUBLIC THAT HIS CAPTAIN REPORTED THAT THE BRIDGE ALARM, WHICH WAS INTENDED TO SOUND AT CERTAIN INTERVALS, WASN'T ACTIVATED AS THE AUTOPILOT NAVIGATED INTO SHALLOW WATER. THE BOAT WAS A TOTAL LOSS, AND EXCAVATORS BEGAN DISMANTLING IT ON FRIDAY.

MAINE SECRETARY OF STATE SHENNA BELLOWS HAS APPEALED A DECISION BY A MAINE SUPERIOR COURT JUDGE IN THE ONGOING BATTLE TO KEEP FORMER PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP OFF THE REPUBLICAN PRIMARY BALLOT. ACCORDING TO TV5, BELLOWS' APPEAL COMES AFTER A JUDGE PAUSED THE DECISION TO HAVE TRUMP EXCLUDED FROM THE PRIMARY BALLOT, PENDING A U-S SUPREME COURT RULING. IN A STATEMENT, RELEASED FRIDAY, BELLOWS SAID "MAINE LAW PROVIDES THE OPPORTUNITY TO SEEK REVIEW FROM THE MAINE SUPREME JUDICIAL COURT – WHICH I REQUESTED TODAY. I KNOW BOTH THE CONSTITUTIONAL AND STATE AUTHORITY QUESTIONS ARE OF GRAVE CONCERN TO MANY. THIS APPEAL ENSURES THAT MAINE'S HIGHEST COURT HAS THE OPPORTUNITY TO WEIGH IN NOW, BEFORE BALLOTS ARE COUNTED, PROMOTING TRUST IN OUR FREE, SAFE AND SECURE ELECTIONS."

LAWYERS FOR FORMER PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP ARE URGING THE SUPREME COURT “TO PUT A SWIFT AND DECISIVE END” TO EFFORTS TO KICK HIM OFF THE 2024 PRESIDENTIAL BALLOT OVER HIS EFFORTS TO OVERTURN HIS 2020 ELECTION LOSS. IN A WRITTEN FILING THURSDAY, TRUMP’S LAWYERS CALLED ON THE COURT TO REVERSE A FIRST-OF-ITS-KIND COLORADO SUPREME COURT DECISION THAT SAID TRUMP SHOULD NOT BE ON THE STATE’S REPUBLICAN PRIMARY BALLOT BECAUSE OF HIS ROLE IN THE EVENTS THAT CULMINATED IN THE JANUARY 6TH ATTACK ON THE U.S. CAPITOL. THE JUSTICES ARE HEARING ARGUMENTS FEBRUARY 8TH IN A CASE THAT BOTH SIDES SAY NEEDS TO BE RESOLVED QUICKLY SO THAT VOTERS KNOW WHETHER TRUMP, THE LEADING REPUBLICAN CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT, IS ELIGIBLE FOR THE PRESIDENCY.

THREE PEOPLE ARE FACING DRUG CHARGES AFTER POLICE SEARCHED A HOME IN CORNVILLE WEDNESDAY MORNING. DURING THE SEARCH, AUTHORITIES SAY THEY FOUND SEVERAL MARIJUANA CULTIVATION ROOMS CONTAINING SEVERAL THOUSAND DOLLARS WORTH OF CULTIVATION EQUIPMENT. THE SOMERSET COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE SEIZED MORE THAN 750 GROWN PLANTS AND OVER 90 POUNDS OF PROCESSED MARIJUANA BUDS WITH AN ESTIMATED STREET VALUE OF 200 THOUSAND DOLLARS. THE THREE PEOPLE ARRESTED ARE BEING HELD AT THE SOMERSET COUNTY JAIL ON \$100-THOUSAND BAIL.

A FISHING TRAWLER THAT WRECKED OFF MAINE'S COAST DURING A POWERFUL STORM, AND REQUIRING AN EARLY-MORNING RESCUE, IS A TOTAL LOSS AND WILL BE DEMOLISHED. THE TARA LYNN II CRASHED INTO THE ROCKS EARLY SATURDAY OFF TRUNDY POINT, A FEW MILES SOUTH OF PORTLAND HEAD LIGHT. THE VESSEL CAME TO REST TOO CLOSE TO SHORE FOR TRADITIONAL BOATS TO GET CLOSE ENOUGH TO RETRIEVE THE CREW, AS WINDS GUSTED TO 50 MPH AND 6-FOOT WAVES PUMMELED THE SHORE. THE CAPE ELIZABETH FIRE AND RESCUE DEPARTMENT'S WATER EXTRICATION TEAM USED AN INFLATABLE BOAT TO REACH THE CREW. THE DEMOLITION OF THE TRAWLER IS EXPECTED TO TAKE DAYS.

A MAINE JUDGE HAS PUT ON HOLD A DECISION ON FORMER PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP'S BALLOT STATUS TO ALLOW TIME FOR THE U.S. SUPREME COURT TO RULE ON A SIMILAR CASE IN COLORADO. TRUMP'S LAWYERS APPEALED IN STATE COURT WHEN SECRETARY OF STATE SHENNA BELLOWS REMOVED THE REPUBLICAN FRONT-RUNNER FROM THE PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY BALLOT BUT THEN ASKED THE JUDGE TO PAUSE PROCEEDINGS TO ALLOW THE SUPREME COURT TO RULE ON THE COLORADO CASE. MAINE SUPERIOR COURT JUDGE MICHAELA MURPHY DENIED TRUMP'S REQUEST TO STAY THE PROCEEDINGS WEDNESDAY BUT SENT THE CASE BACK TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE WITH INSTRUCTIONS TO AWAIT THE OUTCOME OF THE SUPREME COURT CASE BEFORE WITHDRAWING, MODIFYING, OR UPHOLDING HER ORIGINAL DECISION.

GOVERNOR JANET MILLS HAS REQUESTED A MAJOR DISASTER DECLARATION FROM PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN FOLLOWING THE DECEMBER STORM THAT CAUSED FLOODING AND OUTAGES ACROSS THE STATE. ACCORDING TO TV5, THE DECLARATION DOES NOT COVER THE MOST RECENT STORM, FOR WHICH MAINE'S EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY IS STILL WORKING TO ESTIMATE DAMAGE COSTS. GOVERNOR MILLS MADE THE REQUEST TO BIDEN ON TUESDAY FOR EVERY COUNTY IN MAINE EXCEPT AROOSTOOK, CUMBERLAND, AND KNOX COUNTIES. THE DAMAGE TO PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE IS ESTIMATED TO BE \$20-MILLION. AN APPROVED REQUEST WOULD GIVE MAINE ACCESS TO FEDERAL FUNDS TO REPAIR ROADS, BRIDGES, PUBLIC BUILDINGS, UTILITIES AND OTHER PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE. DUE TO THE HIGH LEVEL OF DAMAGE IN ANDROSCOGGIN, FRANKLIN, KENNEBEC, OXFORD AND SOMERSET COUNTIES, THE GOVERNOR ALSO REQUESTED INDIVIDUAL ASSISTANCE TO ELIGIBLE FAMILIES.

THE REMAINS OF A SCHOONER, BURIED AT ACADIA'S SAND BEACH SUFFERED SIGNIFICANT DAMAGE WHEN TWO MORE STORMS SLAMMED INTO MAINE'S COAST LAST WEEK. THE SCHOONER "THE TAY" WHICH WRECKED AND THEN WASHED UP ON THE BEACH IN 1911, WAS ENTIRELY COVERED WITH SAND FOR YEARS. ACCORDING TO THE BANGOR DAILY NEWS, THE SPINE AND RIBS OF THE HULL WERE UNCOVERED IN THE STORM ON JANUARY 10TH, BUT DURING ANOTHER STORM THREE DAYS LATER, WAVES DRAGGED WHAT'S LEFT OF THE SHIP OUT INTO THE WATER. THE B-D-N REPORTS THAT SINCE THEN, PARTS OF THE SKELETON HAVE SEPARATED AND DRIFTED APART AS THE TIDES HAVE SLAMMED IT AGAINST LARGE STONES AT THE WESTERN END OF THE BEACH. OFFICIALS SAY THEY ARE MONITORING THE TAY'S CURRENT SITUATION BUT HAVE LIMITED OPTIONS.

NOT ALL HOMEOWNERS ALONG MAINE'S COAST CAN RECEIVE FEDERAL DISASTER RELIEF MONEY TO RECOVER FROM LAST WEEK'S BACK-TO-BACK STORMS. ACCORDING TO THE BANGOR DAILY NEWS, THAT'S BECAUSE FEDERAL HOUSING ASSISTANCE ONLY SUPPORTS THE REPAIR OR REPLACEMENT OF OWNER-OCCUPIED HOMES THAT SERVE AS PRIMARY RESIDENCES. THAT MEANS SEASONAL, PART-TIME, OR VACANT HOMES ARE INELIGIBLE FOR RELIEF THROUGH FEMA, WHICH ALSO DOES NOT COVER DAMAGES SUSTAINED BY SMALL BUSINESSES. ACCORDING TO U.S. CENSUS DATA, MORE THAN A FIFTH OF MAINE HOMES ARE NOT PRIMARY RESIDENCES FOR THEIR OWNERS. THE B-D-N REPORTS THAT OWNER-OCCUPANCY RATES ARE PARTICULARLY LOW ALONG THE COASTLINE.

THE TAY

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AS WINTER STORMS HAVE STRIPPED SAND OFF THE STATE'S BEACHES, IT'S UNEARTHED AN ARTIFACT AT ACADIA NATIONAL PARK. TV5 REPORTS THE "TAY" IS A SHIPWRECK THAT'S BEEN AT SAND BEACH SINCE 1911. THE REMAINING WRECKAGE HAS BEEN EXPOSED A NUMBER OF TIMES SINCE IT ORIGINALLY CAME ASHORE. IT'S OFTEN DUE TO COASTAL STORMS HEAVILY ERODING THE BEACH. A NUMBER OF VISITORS MADE IT OUT TO SEE THE "TAY," BUT PARK STAFF WANT TO REMIND THE PUBLIC TO LOOK AND NOT TOUCH.

WITH ANOTHER STORM HEADED OUR WAY THIS WEEKEND, THE MAINE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY IS URGING MAINERS TO STAY VIGILANT. PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER VANESSA CORSON TELLS TV5 THAT WEDNESDAY'S STORM WAS MORE OF A COASTAL EVENT, COMPARED TO THE DECEMBER 18TH STORM, BUT EVERYONE WHO MAY BE IMPACTED BY THE NEXT STORM NEEDS TO PREPARE ACCORDINGLY. THAT INCLUDES CHARGING YOUR PHONES, HAVING EXTRA BATTERIES AND A FLASHLIGHT ON HAND, AND MAKING SURE YOU HAVE ENOUGH FOOD AND WATER TO LAST A FEW DAYS. THE NEXT STORM IS EXPECTED TO BRING SNOW, SLEET, AND RAIN TO THE REGION LATE FRIDAY NIGHT AND INTO SATURDAY.

WEDNESDAY'S STORM FLOODED SECTIONS OF DOWNTOWN BANGOR. THE FROZEN KENDUSKEAG STREAM ROSE UP NEARLY TO THE FOOTBRIDGES, BEFORE RELEASING ITS ICE INTO THE PENOBSCOT RIVER AND RECEDING. ACCORDING TO W-L-B-Z, THE WATER ROSE INTO SEVERAL PARKING LOTS ON EITHER SIDE OF THE STREAM, FORCING DRIVERS TO QUICKLY SEEK HIGHER GROUND. DESPITE THE SHEER FORCE OF THE WIND AND RAIN, THE INFRASTRUCTURE IN GREATER BANGOR FARED MUCH BETTER THAN DURING DECEMBER'S STORM. VERSANT POWER SAYS OUTAGES WERE ONLY A FRACTION OF WHAT THEY WERE LAST MONTH. THOUGH FLOOD WATERS HAVE SUBSIDED AND MOST POWER CUSTOMERS HAVE HAD THEIR SERVICE RESTORED, CREWS WILL CONTINUE CLEANING UP THE SEVERAL TREES THAT CAME DOWN THROUGHOUT THE GREATER BANGOR AREA.

DEMOCRATS WHO CONTROL THE MAINE LEGISLATURE HAVE TURNED BACK A REPUBLICAN EFFORT TO IMPEACH THE STATE'S TOP ELECTION OFFICIAL FOR HER DECISION TO KEEP FORMER PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP OFF THE BALLOT. THE PARTY-LINE VOTE IN THE MAINE HOUSE ON TUESDAY WAS 80-60 AGAINST MOVING FORWARD WITH THE EFFORT TO IMPEACH SHENNA BELLOWS. SHE'S THE FIRST SECRETARY OF STATE IN HISTORY TO BLOCK SOMEONE FROM RUNNING FOR PRESIDENT BY INVOKING THE U.S. CONSTITUTION'S INSURRECTION CLAUSE. BELLOWS HAS CALLED THE IMPEACHMENT EFFORT POLITICAL THEATER. HER DECISION IS UNDER APPEAL IN MAINE SUPERIOR COURT AND BELLOWS HAS VOWED TO ABIDE BY ANY LEGAL DECISION.

WITH ANOTHER HIGH-IMPACT STORM FORECAST TO HIT THE STATE TONIGHT INTO TOMORROW, UTILITY CREWS ARE PREPARING FOR WIDE-SPREAD POWER OUTAGES. VERSANT POWER TELLS TV5 OVER 100 INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL CREWS, AND TREE CREWS ARE AT THE READY. OFFICIALS SAY, BASED ON THE CURRENT FORECAST, THEY DO EXPECT MULTI-DAY RESTORATION EFFORTS, BUT THEY HOPE CLEAN-UP WILL BE ABLE TO BEGIN SOONER THAN DECEMBER'S STORM, DUE TO THE WINDS SLOWING AT AN EARLIER HOUR. THE STORM ON DECEMBER 18TH LEFT HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF MAINERS WITHOUT POWER FOR DAYS. VERSANT REMINDS PEOPLE NOT TO TOUCH ANY DOWNED WIRES AND TO SLOW DOWN WHEN APPROACHING A WORK CREW.

FORMER PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP IS ASKING A MAINE JUDGE TO HALT PROCEEDINGS ON BALLOT ACCESS TO ALLOW THE U.S. SUPREME COURT TO RULE ON A COLORADO CASE IN WHICH TRUMP WAS KICKED OFF THE BALLOT OVER HIS ROLE IN THE JANUARY 6TH ATTACK ON THE U.S. CAPITOL. IN MAINE, DEMOCRAT SHENNA BELLOWS BECAME THE FIRST SECRETARY OF STATE IN HISTORY TO BAR SOMEONE FROM RUNNING FOR THE PRESIDENCY UNDER THE RARELY USED SECTION 3 OF THE 14TH AMENDMENT. THAT PROVISION PROHIBITS THOSE WHO “ENGAGED IN INSURRECTION” FROM HOLDING OFFICE. IN COLORADO, THE STATE SUPREME COURT REACHED THE SAME CONCLUSION IN A 4-3 DECISION. THAT CASE HAS BEEN APPEALED TO THE U.S. SUPREME COURT BY TRUMP’S ATTORNEYS. ARGUMENTS ARE SCHEDULED FOR NEXT MONTH.

THE 9-1-1 CALLS THAT FLOODED INTO DISPATCHERS AS A GUNMAN OPENED FIRE AT A BOWLING ALLEY AND A BAR IN LEWISTON, REFLECT THE CHAOS OF LAST OCTOBER'S ATTACK. THE 9-1-1 TRANSCRIPTS, RELEASED MONDAY, SHOW THAT PEOPLE BEGAN IDENTIFYING THE SHOOTER SOON AFTER A PHOTO WAS RELEASED TO THE PUBLIC. THE TRANSCRIPTS CAPTURED TENSE MOMENTS INCLUDING DISPATCHERS STAYING ON THE PHONE TO PROVIDE ENCOURAGEMENT, TELLING CALLERS TO STAY QUIET, AND TO WAIT FOR POLICE TO ANNOUNCE THEIR ARRIVAL. ALL TOLD, 18 PEOPLE WERE KILLED AND 13 WOUNDED WHEN AN ARMY RESERVIST OPENED FIRE ON OCTOBER 25TH. THE GUNMAN LATER KILLED HIMSELF.

GOVERNOR JANET MILLS IS WEIGHING IN ON THE SECRETARY OF STATE'S DECISION TO REMOVE FORMER PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP FROM MAINE'S PRIMARY BALLOT. IN A STATEMENT, RELEASED THURSDAY, A MILLS SPOKESPERSON SAID, IN PART, "THE GOVERNOR RECOGNIZES THAT THE SECRETARY OF STATE WAS REQUIRED BY MAINE STATUTE TO RULE ON THE PETITION BEFORE HER, AND SHE RESPECTS THE DELIBERATIONS THAT THE SECRETARY UNDERTOOK TO ARRIVE AT HER DECISION." IT WENT ON TO SAY, "WHILE THE SECRETARY WAS REQUIRED BY LAW TO RULE ON THE PETITION, THE GOVERNOR BELIEVES THAT THE QUESTION OF WHETHER FORMER PRESIDENT TRUMP VIOLATED THE 14TH AMENDMENT IS A QUESTION THAT MUST BE ANSWERED BY THE COURTS – AND SHE BELIEVES IT SHOULD BE DONE SO NATIONALLY RATHER THAN IN A PIECEMEAL FASHION STATE-BY-STATE." THE GOVERNOR ALSO CONDEMNED THE THREATS OF VIOLENCE THAT SECRETARY OF STATE SHENNA BELLOWS AND HER STAFF HAVE DEALT WITH SINCE THE DECISION.

GOVERNOR JANET MILLS WILL DELIVER THE STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESS TO A LIVE AUDIENCE OF LAWMAKERS LATER THIS MONTH. ACCORDING TO TV5, MILLS ANNOUNCED THURSDAY SHE WILL DELIVER THE ADDRESS IN THE HOUSE CHAMBER ON JANUARY 30TH AT 7PM. IN HER REMARKS, MILLS IS EXPECTED TO HIGHLIGHT THE RESILIENCE AND RESOLVE OF MAINE PEOPLE OVER THE PAST YEAR, ESPECIALLY IN THE LAST SEVERAL MONTHS, WHICH WERE MARKED BY OCTOBER'S MASS SHOOTING IN LEWISTON AND DECEMBER'S SEVERE WIND, RAIN, AND FLOODING, AMONG OTHER CHALLENGES. THE GOVERNOR WILL ALSO OUTLINE HER POLICY PROPOSALS.

THE FATHER OF ONE OF 18 PEOPLE KILLED IN MAINE'S DEADLIEST MASS SHOOTING DELIVERED AN IMPASSIONED PLEA FOR ACTION WEDNESDAY AS STATE LAWMAKERS CONVENED FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE THE TRAGEDY. HONORING VICTIMS, SURVIVORS, AND FIRST RESPONDERS WAS THE FIRST ORDER OF BUSINESS FOR LAWMAKERS WHO'LL BE TAKING UP GUN CONTROL PROPOSALS AND POTENTIAL CHANGES TO THE STATE'S SO-CALLED YELLOW FLAG LAW, WHICH ALLOWS POLICE TO REMOVE GUNS FROM SOMEONE IN A MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS. ARTHUR BARNARD TOLD A RALLY OF GUN CONTROL ACTIVISTS WEDNESDAY THAT IT WAS TIME TO FIX "CARELESS" LAWS, STOP PLAYING THE BLAME GAME, AND WORK TOGETHER TO PREVENT FUTURE TRAGEDIES. HIS SON, ARTHUR STROUT, WAS GUNNED DOWN IN THE SHOOTINGS IN LEWISTON ON OCTOBER 25TH.

MAINE REPUBLICANS WANT TO UNSEAT SECRETARY OF STATE SHENNA BELLOWS FOR BARRING FORMER PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP FROM THE PRIMARY BALLOT. HOWEVER, THEY FACE LONG ODDS. BELLOWS IS A STALWART AND INFLUENTIAL DEMOCRAT WHOSE PARTY HOLDS FIRM CONTROL OVER BOTH LEGISLATIVE HOUSES. BELLOWS IS THE FIRST SECRETARY OF STATE IN HISTORY TO BLOCK SOMEONE FROM RUNNING FOR PRESIDENT BY USING THE U.S. CONSTITUTION'S INSURRECTION CLAUSE. TRUMP, THE EARLY FRONT-RUNNER FOR THE 2024 REPUBLICAN PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION, APPEALED THE DECISION ON TUESDAY. HE'S EXPECTED TO SOON APPEAL A SIMILAR BAN BY THE COLORADO SUPREME COURT.

TWO PEOPLE WERE ARRESTED IN BELGRADE TUESDAY MORNING AFTER 23-HUNDRED MARIJUANA PLANTS WERE SEIZED AT TWO HOMES. STATE POLICE SAY 44-YEAR-OLD YUEQUAN CHEN OF MASSACHUSETTS AND 66-YEAR-OLD LI MIN CHAN OF FLORIDA ARE CHARGED WITH ILLEGAL CULTIVATION AND TRAFFICKING. TV5 REPORTS POLICE SEARCHED THE HOMES ON GUPTILL AND POINT ROADS AFTER RECEIVING COMPLAINTS FROM THE COMMUNITY. THE MEN ARE BEING HELD AT THE KENNEBEC COUNTY JAIL.

(CAREFUL WITH THOSE NAMES)

THREE PEOPLE HAVE BEEN ARRESTED IN CONNECTION WITH AN ILLEGAL MARIJUANA GROWING OPERATION IN THE TOWN OF CHINA. ACCORDING TO TV5, OVER THE WEEKEND THE KENNEBEC COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE WAS CALLED TO A HOME ON ROUTE 3 FOR A REPORT OF SOMEONE BEING HELD AGAINST THEIR WILL. WHILE NO ONE FITTING THAT DESCRIPTION WAS FOUND, POLICE DID DISCOVER AN ILLEGAL MARIJUANA GROWING OPERATION. THE THREE RESIDENTS, 36-YEAR-OLD CHANGGENG CHEN, 41-YEAR-OLD BING XU, AND 43-YEAR-OLD AIQIN CHEN WERE ALL ARRESTED AND CHARGED WITH UNLAWFUL TRAFFICKING OF SCHEDULED DRUGS. AUTHORITIES SAY NEARLY 1,000 MATURE PLANTS AND A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF SEEDLINGS WERE SEIZED FROM THE SCENE.

FORMER PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP IS APPEALING THE DECISION BY MAINE'S SECRETARY OF STATE THAT REMOVED HIM FROM THE PRIMARY BALLOT. LAST WEEK, SHENNA BELLOWS BECAME THE FIRST ELECTION OFFICIAL TO TAKE ACTION UNILATERALLY TO BAR TRUMP UNDER THE INSURRECTION CLAUSE OF THE 14TH AMENDMENT. THE CIVIL WAR-ERA CLAUSE BANS THOSE WHO "ENGAGED IN INSURRECTION" FROM OFFICE. TRUMP'S APPEAL TO MAINE'S SUPERIOR COURT CAME TUESDAY. HE'S ALSO EXPECTED TO APPEAL A SIMILAR RULING BY COLORADO'S SUPREME COURT TO THE *U.S.* SUPREME COURT. THE NATION'S HIGHEST COURT, WHICH HAS NEVER RULED ON SECTION 3 OF THE 14TH AMENDMENT, IS LIKELY TO HAVE THE FINAL WORD ON TRUMP'S ELIGIBILITY IN COLORADO, MAINE AND ELSEWHERE.

HONORING VICTIMS, SURVIVORS AND FIRST RESPONDERS FOLLOWING THE DEADLIEST MASS SHOOTING IN MAINE HISTORY IS THE FIRST ORDER OF BUSINESS FOR STATE LAWMAKERS AS THEY GET BACK TO WORK. A PLANNED TRIBUTE TODAY IS EXPECTED TO SET THE TONE FOR A SESSION THAT WILL INCLUDE SEVERAL GUN PROPOSALS; INCLUDING POTENTIAL CHANGES TO THE STATE'S SO-CALLED YELLOW FLAG LAW. ALSO AWAITING ATTENTION IS A G-O-P LAWMAKER'S REQUEST TO IMPEACH SECRETARY OF STATE SHENNA BELLOWS. SHE DENIED FORMER PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP A SPOT ON THE REPUBLICAN PRIMARY BALLOT. IT'S UNCLEAR HOW THE IMPEACHMENT PROCESS WOULD PLAY OUT IN THE DEMOCRATIC-CONTROLLED LEGISLATURE.

THE STATE LEGISLATURE IS SET TO RECONVENE IN AUGUSTA ON WEDNESDAY. ACCORDING TO TV5, THE MAINE SENATE WILL BEGIN TOMORROW'S SESSION WITH A TRIBUTE TO THE LEWISTON SHOOTING VICTIMS. REVEREND SARAH GILLESPIE OF ANDROSCOGGIN HOME HEALTHCARE AND HOSPICE WILL OFFER THE OPENING PRAYER, AND THE LEWISTON HIGH SCHOOL CHAMBER SINGERS WILL PERFORM THE NATIONAL ANTHEM. SENATOR PEGGY ROTUNDO OF LEWISTON WILL ALSO PRESENT A JOINT RESOLUTION TO HONOR THE MEMORY OF THE VICTIMS. SEVERAL COMMITTEE HEARINGS AND WORK SESSIONS ARE SCHEDULED THROUGHOUT THE DAY. GUNS, HOUSING, AND SPENDING PLANS FOR STATE REVENUE SURPLUSES ARE EXPECTED TO BE AMONG THE BIGGEST ISSUES FACING LAWMAKERS THIS SESSION.

A FAKE SWATTING CALL WAS MADE TO THE HOME OF MAINE SECRETARY OF STATE SHENNA BELLOWS. THE MAINE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY SAYS A MAN CALLED EMERGENCY SERVICES FRIDAY NIGHT CLAIMING HE BROKE INTO A HOUSE IN MANCHESTER, WHICH TURNED OUT TO BE BELLOWS' RESIDENCE. NO ONE WAS HOME AT THE TIME, AND RESPONDING OFFICERS FOUND NOTHING SUSPICIOUS. "SWATTING" INVOLVES MAKING A PHONE CALL TO EMERGENCY SERVICES WITH THE INTENT THAT A LARGE FIRST RESPONDER PRESENCE, INCLUDING SWAT TEAMS, WILL SHOW UP AT A HOME. BELLOWS SAYS SHE, HER FAMILY AND HER WORKERS HAVE BEEN TARGETED SINCE SHE REMOVED FORMER PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP'S NAME THURSDAY FROM THE MAINE BALLOT, CITING THE CONSTITUTION'S INSURRECTION CLAUSE. TRUMP SAYS HE PLANS TO APPEAL TO THE STATE COURTS.