

News From The States

EVENING WRAP

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By [Kate Queram](#)

One of my great parenting struggles is my general distaste for repeating myself, particularly when the thing I am being asked to repeat is a very obvious thing that I have already said four times. I will inevitably say it a fifth time, and no one listens, and then in five or 10 minutes, someone is crying about something that definitely *would not have happened* if *anyone in my house* could just use *their listening ears* to hear the *very obvious thing I said five separate times oh my god*.

This is also how I feel about our national mass-shooting epidemic. The problem is the guns. To stop the shootings, you need to do something about the guns. I — so many of us — keep repeating this, even though there is no point. It is screaming into the void. It is repeating yourself endlessly for people who are doing their very best to ignore you. And it's enough to drive you crazy.



The Big Takeaway

A dive team joined a sprawling manhunt in Maine Friday as hundreds of law enforcement agents continued to comb the state in search of an Army reservist suspected of [killing 18 people](#) in a pair of mass shootings in Lewiston. The divers will be deployed in the Androscoggin River, near where police found the suspect's car and other evidence after the shootings on Wednesday, [the Maine Morning Star reported](#).

"I'm not saying that we know the suspect is in the water," Mike Sauschuck, commissioner of the state Department of Public Safety, said at a press conference Friday. "What I'm telling you is you're going to see a lot of activity here."



*Mike Sauschuck at Friday morning's press conference.
(Photo by the Maine Morning Star)*

Police will also continue to search other areas, including the bowling alley and bar where the shootings took place, Sauschuck said. He confirmed that police had found a note while executing a search warrant at the suspect's home, but declined to provide details.

Thousands of residents continued to shelter in place as the search entered its second day, and schools and businesses in much of the state remained closed. Sauschuck said police would reevaluate those orders on a daily basis, indicating that the manhunt could stretch into the weekend.

"It's easy to think, 'What's taking so long' because everything we watch gets solved in an hour, but in order for us to do our jobs and be respectful, we have to take our time," Sauschuck said. "We're not going to be rushed."



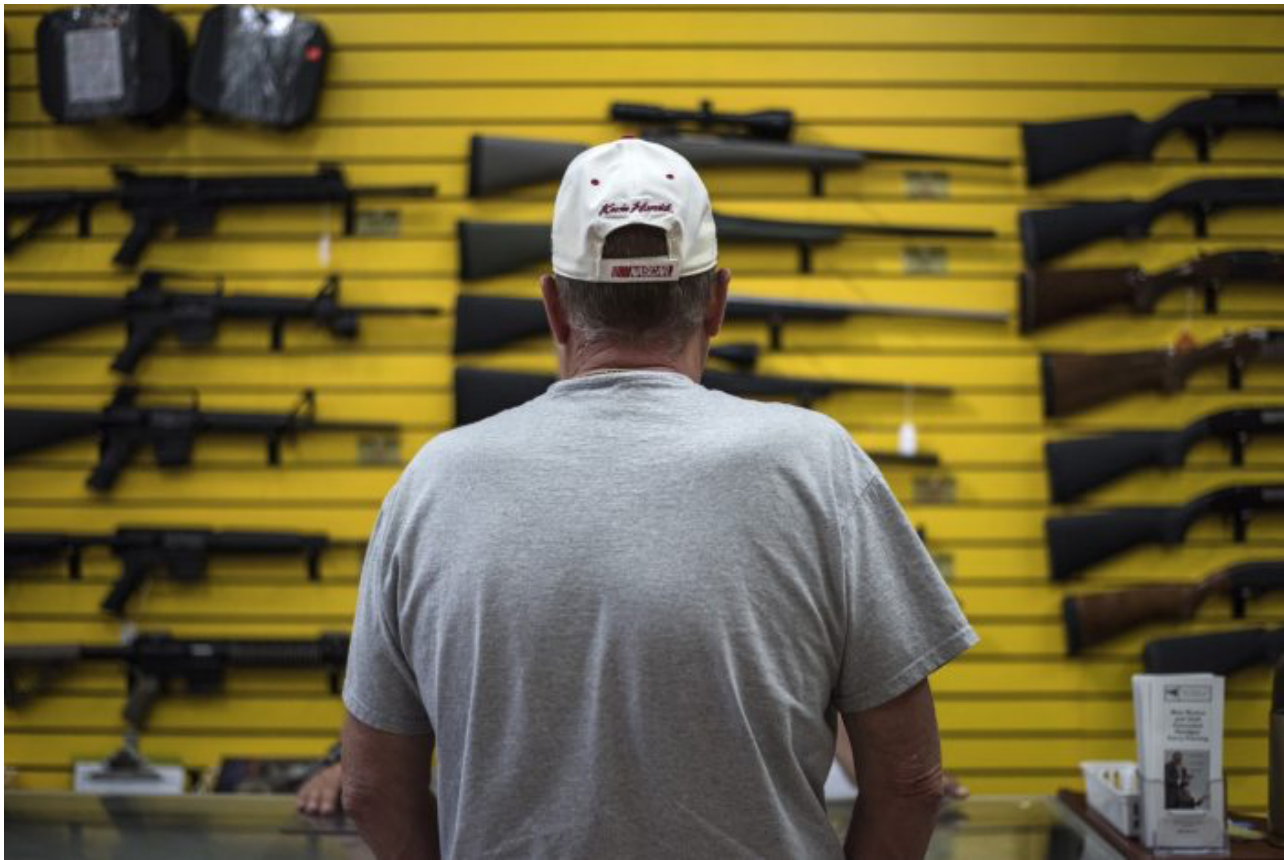
*A police officer stands beside a roadblock outside Schemengees Bar & Grille in Lewiston, where eight people were murdered by a gunman in a mass shooting.
(Photo by Emma Davis/Maine Morning Star)*

The shooting reignited America’s perpetual debate over gun control, which unfolded mostly along the same worn-in lines: With Democrats [calling for](#) sensible policies to curb access to firearms, and Republicans either offering [“thoughts and prayers”](#) or blaming our national epidemic of mass shootings [on anything](#) other than the guns used to commit them. Among the reticent was U.S. Sen. Susan Collins, a Maine Republican [who said Thursday](#) it was “more important” to ban “very high-capacity magazines” rather than the assault rifles [that are regularly used to murder Americans](#) in mass shootings.

“I think that would have more input and effectiveness,” said Collins, whose [voting record](#) reflects a decidedly pro-firearms stance.

Collins also questioned why the suspect’s reported [mental health struggles](#) did not trigger Maine’s “yellow flag” law, which allows police to temporarily confiscate firearms from anyone deemed by a medical provider to be a danger to themselves or others. The policy was approved in 2019 and has been invoked [at least 24 times](#) since, per the Maine Morning Star.

“It certainly seems that on the basis of the facts that we have, that the ‘yellow flag’ law should have been triggered,” Collins said in a press conference Thursday evening. “I’m sure after the fact that’s going to be looked at very closely.”



*Guns, yellow, relevant.
(Photo by Sergio Flores/Bloomberg, Getty Images)*

You don't really have to look that closely to understand why nothing happened — you just need a basic understanding of how Maine's policy differs from the more commonly known "red flag" law. Those measures, currently active [in 21 states](#), allow family members or friends to directly petition the court to remove firearms from a person in crisis, allowing the process to begin without involving police. The laws also do not typically require a mental health evaluation, clearing an administrative hurdle that can delay confiscation.

Those evaluations are "a unique tool that has the potential to help us ensure that people who have intentions to do harm are not able to possess a firearm for up to a year," said Michael Rocque, an associate professor of sociology at Bates College in Lewiston. "But it is also not something that can be easily invoked. I think that it really is a fundamental compromise between gun rights activists and gun control activists."

The policy is one of few gun control measures [in Maine](#), which does not ban high-capacity magazines, confiscate firearms from domestic abusers under active restraining orders, or require permits or training to [carry a concealed weapon](#). (Lawmakers considered — [and ultimately rejected](#) — a handful of other gun control proposals earlier this year.) Reconsidering some of those policies could deter future mass shootings, according to [Rocque's research](#), which found fewer mass shootings and fewer gun-related fatalities in places with gun permit laws and bans on high-capacity magazines, among other things.

Until now, Maine — a state with lax gun laws *and* relatively low rates of gun violence — was an outlier in that research. Statewide, there were just 29 homicides last year, and by Rocque’s definition, Maine went 42 years without a mass shooting. But in a country teeming with guns that are regulated only by a patchwork of [state-level policies](#), no place is impervious to mass shootings. There are obvious solutions, Rocque said, even if certain lawmakers would prefer to believe otherwise.

“There’s this big disconnect between what we know and what the people who are able to draft policy and then pass it either know, or care about knowing,” he said.



(Photo by Robin Bravender/States Newsroom)

The shooting eliminated that disconnect for U.S. Rep. Jared Golden, a centrist Democrat from Lewiston who called for a ban on assault weapons Thursday after years of breaking with his party to vote against similar proposals. Golden, a Marine Corps veteran, said his position had been rooted in “false confidence that our community was above this and that we could be in full control, among many other misjudgments,” [per the Morning Star](#).

“The time has now come for me to take responsibility for this failure, which is why I now call on the United States Congress to ban assault rifles like the one used by the sick perpetrator of this mass killing,” he said. “For the good of my

community, I will work with any colleague to get this done in the time that I have in Congress. To the people of Lewiston, to my constituents in the second district, to those who have been harmed, I ask for forgiveness and support as I seek to put an end to these terrible shootings.”

It’s unlikely that Congress will consider substantive gun control legislation before Golden’s term ends in 2025. (He faces a tough re-election bid in a conservative district where Republican challengers [have already slammed him](#) for “using” a tragedy to advance a “liberal political agenda.”) Congress almost never considers substantive gun control legislation — [last year’s bipartisan bill](#), a compromise measure with far fewer restrictions than Democrats had sought, broke a three-decade stalemate on the issue — and that was before House Republicans selected Rep. Mike Johnson (R-La.), a far-right hardliner, as their leader. Johnson said Thursday that the immediate aftermath of a mass shooting is “not the time” to talk about bills that might prevent other mass shootings, which, by the way, don’t even have anything to do with guns!

“The problem is the human heart. It’s not guns, it’s not the weapons,” he told Fox News’ Sean Hannity. “At the end of the day, we have to protect the right of the citizens to protect themselves, and that’s the Second Amendment, and that’s why our party stands so strongly for that.”

Sanctity of human life, and all that: [After Maine shooting, Connecticut leaders urge action, promote gun buyback program ... Florida flags ordered to half-staff in recognition of Maine shooting deaths ... Lewiston artist spreads love on Main Street in aftermath of Maine shooting ... Condolences for Maine pour in ‘from away’ ... Mass shootings are on the rise in Minnesota ... U.S. Sen. Jon Tester \(R-Mont.\), hunting groups cheer restoration of hunters safety, archery classes ... Domestic violence advocates say Oklahoma gun reforms needed to protect victims ... On fifth anniversary of Pittsburgh synagogue shootings, lawmakers continue push for change ... Parker and Oh talk gun violence, opioid crisis, and housing in Philadelphia mayoral forum ... New FBI data shows homicides are slowing in West Virginia. Other crime data, however, remains hard to parse ... Politicians love to cite crime data. It’s often wrong.](#)



Also Trending

The planet is careening toward “uncharted climate territory” that will likely become uninhabitable for humans by the end of this century, according to research released Tuesday. It’s not too late for those in power to do something about that, researchers said, but it will take profound — and rapid — policy changes to give humanity “our best shot at surviving,” [the Oregon Capital Chronicle reported](#).



*buckled roadway, courtesy of Hurricane Ian.
(Photo by Win McNamee/Getty Images)*

[The State of the Climate report](#), compiled by a team of 12 climate scientists from around the world, examined 45 studies and analyses to gauge the state of Earth’s “vital signs,” like global temperatures, forest cover and sea ice. What they found is a planet “under siege,” according to the report.

“For several decades, scientists have consistently warned of a future marked by extreme climatic conditions because of escalating global temperatures caused by ongoing human activities that release harmful greenhouse gases into the atmosphere,” it said. “Unfortunately, time is up.”

The report detailed a number of alarming trends, including a host of “extraordinary” climate-related records shattered this year. This summer was the warmest period ever recorded. Antarctic sea ice reached its lowest level in history. Wildfires in Canada released more than a billion tons of carbon into the atmosphere — more than the country’s entire emissions in 2021, according to the report.

Unsurprisingly, we are woefully unprepared for this eventuality. Researchers predicted that the [2015 Paris Accords](#), which set a long-term goal of keeping global temperature rise at or below 1.5 degrees Celsius, will likely fail. (The United Nations [concur](#).) There’s still (some) (maybe) time to act, but doing so would require a massive and fundamental shift in the global economy, beginning with our continued dependence on fossil fuels. The existing system supports “excessive consumption by the wealthy” that disproportionately harms the

climate and exacerbates food insecurity and displacement among lower-income populations, the report said.

Other recommendations include the immediate cessation of coal consumption (most of which comes from China, so good luck with that) and the implementation of more land-use policies that sequester carbon. Probably some of those ideas will be discussed next month in the United Arab Emirates, where world leaders are expected to meet for the annual United Nations climate conference. I can't wait for nothing to come of it!

Get outside: [South Arkansas power company tells lawmakers goal is to boost reliance on renewable energy](#) ... [Following extreme heat, Florida gets \\$106 million from feds to help families pay energy bills](#) ... [Federal funds boost tribal-led revival efforts for salmon in Idaho's upper Columbia River Basin](#) ... [Indiana drainage task force fumbles on final report](#) ... [Michigan Senate advances clean energy legislation amid fierce opposition from Republicans](#) ... [Long Island politicians claim victory for New York Gov. Kathy Hochul's wind power veto](#) ... [EPA explains why it authorized imports of GenX from Netherlands to North Carolina](#) ... [Environmental Protection Agency sued over Tennessee landfill for radioactive waste](#) ... [Author Dan Egan talks with The Texas Tribune about phosphorus overuse and toxic algae blooms](#) ... [Sheep graze on Texas solar farms as renewable energy companies embrace agriculture](#)



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One Last Thing

Taylor Swift is [now a billionaire](#). So. That happened.

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