

Groton Daily Independent

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Saturday, March 26

Birthdays: Bob Wegner, Clare Davidson, Jonathan Cutler, Justin Morehouse, Mark Thompson, Noah Thurston, Scott Kettering, Clayton Kurtz, Samantha Menzia

4:30pm: St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church Mass

Sunday, March 27

Easter Sunday

Birthdays: Dwight Strom, Gail Schinkel, Michelle Walter

7:00am: Emmanuel Lutheran Sunrise Service with Breakfast by League

7:30am: St. John's Lutheran Easter Breakfast

9:00am: St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church Mass

9:00am: St. John's Lutheran Worship

10:00am: Heaven Bound Ministries worship at Pierpont Church

10:15am: Emmanuel Lutheran Worship

11:00am: United Methodist Church Worship

3:00pm: HBM Easter Worship at Golden Living Center

Monday, March 28

NO SCHOOL - EASTER BREAK

Senior Menu: Meatloaf, baked potato with sour cream, creamed peas, fruited Jell-O, whole wheat bread

Anniv: Gail & John Zeck

Birthdays: Craig Dunker, David Johnston, John Wheeting, Lana Jondahl, Neil Warrington, Riley Thurston, Bennett Suther

6:30am: Emmanuel Lutheran Bible Study

7:00pm: Dollar General hearing at Community Center

Not sure where to go for Easter service? How about coming to Pierpont for our 10 a.m. worship?! It is a special day! For as the angel said, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here. He has risen!"

Open: Recycling Trailer in Groton
The recycling trailer is located at 10 East Railroad Ave.

The cardboard/paper

recycling trailer at the school is **Open**

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April 1 Deadline for Property Tax Assessment Freeze Program

PIERRE, S.D. – Elderly and disabled South Dakotans have until April 1 to apply for property tax relief under South Dakota's Assessment Freeze for the Elderly and Disabled Program.

Under the program, for tax purposes, the homeowner's property assessment is prevented from increasing. If the actual value of the home increases, the homeowner still pays property taxes on the former (lower) value.

To be eligible for the Assessment Freeze for the Elderly and Disabled Program, individuals must meet the following qualifications:

- Have incomes of less than \$27,423.54 for a single-member household (only one individual in the household) or less than \$34,279.42 for a multiple-member household.

- Have owned or retained a life estate in a single-family dwelling, in fee or by contract to purchase, for at least one year and have been a resident of South Dakota for at least one year

Have resided for at least 200 days of the previous calendar year in the single-family dwelling

Be 65 years of age or older OR disabled (as defined by the Social Security Act).

Un-remarried widows/widowers of those who were previously qualified may still qualify in some circumstances. The valuation limit for the program is \$188,240.34 or more of full and true value, meaning that property valued above those limits is not eligible unless the applicant has previously qualified.

Deadline to apply for the program is April 1, 2016, and applications must be submitted to the county treasurer. Applications are available from local county treasurers' offices or by contacting the Department of Revenue, Property and Special Taxes Division in Pierre at 605-773-3139 or 1-800-829-9188 (press "2" for the Property and Special Taxes Division). Additional information and the online application are available at http://dor.sd.gov/Taxes/Property_Taxes/Forms.aspx (see PT-38 "Assessment Freeze for Elderly and Disabled").

For additional information on the assessment freeze or other property tax relief programs, please contact the Department of Revenue, Property and Special Taxes Division.

Governor Signs Final Bills Of The Session

PIERRE, S.D. – Gov. Dennis Daugaard signed the last bills of the 2016 Legislative Session into law today: SB 148 – An Act to authorize additional nursing facility beds for the Michael J. Fitzmaurice Veterans Home and to declare an emergency.

SB 158 – An Act to revise provisions related to restitution in cases involving juveniles and to declare an emergency.

SB 159 – An Act to provide a tax credit to insurance companies that contribute to an organization providing educational scholarships to certain students.

HB 1005 – An Act to revise and repeal certain fees that are established to compensate counties for services provided by county officials.

HB 1044 – An Act to revise the state aid to general education formula.

HB 1060 – An Act to revise certain provisions regarding the South Dakota Board of Geographic Names.

HB 1088 – An Act to revise and consolidate certain civil forfeiture provisions.

HB 1145 – An Act to require accredited schools to accept transfer credits for courses taken by students from other accredited schools during the summer.

HB 1218 – An Act to require certain notice procedures for any revision of municipal ordinances.

Gov. Dugaard Vetoes SB 136

PIERRE, S.D. – Gov. Dennis Dugaard has vetoed the following bill:

SB 136 – An Act to permit certain cropland along lakes, rivers, and streams to be assessed as noncropland.

For more information about this bill and other bills, visit legis.sd.gov.

March 25, 2016

The Honorable Matt Michels

President of the Senate

500 East Capitol Avenue

Pierre, SD 57501

Dear Mr. President and Members of the Senate,

I respectfully return to you Senate Bill 136, with my VETO.

This bill provides that “any agricultural land that has crop-rated soils within fifty feet of a lake, river, or stream shall be categorized as noncropland if the land is seeded to perennial vegetation. The land shall be assessed as noncropland for the purposes of determining the agricultural income value of land.”

In short, this bill requires the county director of equalization to lower the property tax assessment on perennial buffer strips adjacent to water bodies, which will result in a loss of property tax valuation and a shift of that tax burden to other property owners.

This bill does not create a new, fourth class of property, but instead changes the treatment of certain lands within the agricultural property class. I am concerned that this bill is in violation of Article XI, § 2 of the South Dakota Constitution, which provides that “[t]axes shall be uniform on all property of the same class ...” This bill taxes agricultural property within fifty feet of a stream or river differently than agricultural property not in proximity to a stream or river.

In addition, this bill breaches the longstanding principle of taxing property based on its highest and best use. In recent years, many farmers have voluntarily established grass buffer strips adjacent to riparian areas. These buffers are often comprised of high quality crop-rated soils.

Under this bill, the taxes paid by landowners of these crop-rated soils would be reduced and the burden shifted to other property owners. This is because any loss of property valuation results in higher property tax levies to prevent revenue losses to schools, counties, townships, and other taxing districts.

Subsidizing land-use decisions through property tax policy is contrary to the tenet of highest and best use – a fundamental property tax principle and the foundation of our entire property tax system.

Further, the plain language of the bill provides for numerous unintended consequences. For instance, section 1 refers to land “seeded to perennial vegetation.” As one example, in South Dakota alfalfa is “perennial vegetation” commonly harvested as a crop (alfalfa hay). If grown within 50 feet of a riparian area, that alfalfa hay land may qualify for a tax reduction. However, section 2 does not anticipate “perennial vegetation” being grown as a crop because it specifically states that “Any person who requested that land be categorized as noncropland pursuant to section 1 of this Act and changes the use of the land to cropland or another use [italics added] shall notify” the director of equalization. This ambiguous language makes it difficult to determine how this bill will impact crop-rated soils planted to alfalfa.

Implementing this bill would require the Department of Revenue and county directors of equalization to determine whether dry creek beds, field waterways, small ponds, and other watercourses meet the definition of a “lake, river, or stream.” They are further tasked with establishing where the riparian area starts and ends – determinations these entities may not be equipped to make. All told, these challenges will result in greater uncertainty and more resources required to determine the appropriate tax.

While the bill’s intent to improve water quality is laudable, shifting the tax burden from one taxpayer to another due to a voluntary management decision is bad tax policy. Its questionable constitutionality and ambiguous language also invites potential legal challenges. For these reasons, I oppose this bill and ask that you sustain my veto.

Respectfully submitted,

Dennis Dugaard

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Gov. Dugaard Vetoes SB 100

PIERRE, S.D. – Gov. Dennis Dugaard has vetoed the following bill:
SB 100 – An Act to enhance South Dakota economic development through broadband infrastructure improvements.

For more information about this bill and other bills, visit legis.sd.gov.

-30-

Note: A copy of the Governor's veto message follows:
March 25, 2016

The Honorable Matt Michels
President of the Senate
500 East Capitol Avenue
Pierre, SD 57501

Dear Mr. President and Members of the Senate,
I respectfully return to you Senate Bill 100, with my VETO.

Senate Bill 100 is an Act to enhance South Dakota economic development through broadband infrastructure improvements.

This bill makes fundamental changes to the Reinvestment Payment Program, part of the Building South Dakota legislation passed by the Legislature in 2013. Under the current program, businesses may apply to the Board of Economic Development for a sales and use tax refund on projects in excess of \$20 million or \$2 million in equipment costs. Refunds are not automatic; applications are reviewed to determine whether the incentive is necessary to secure the project for South Dakota. The Board of Economic Development's evaluation process lies at the heart of our state's economic development incentives and ensures that our state's taxpayers are not asked to pay for projects that would occur without a state incentive.

The changes in Senate Bill 100 would be a step back to the system of automatic tax refunds that the Reinvestment Payment Program was designed to replace. Specifically, the bill makes qualification automatic for a segment of broadband projects receiving federal grant funds. Clearly, companies receiving a federal grant have already committed to their project regardless of any state incentive. In addition, the bill creates internal inconsistencies in the law that will make it confusing for the Board of Economic Development to administer, and for prospective applicants to understand. The Board of Economic Development must have the authority to direct our state's incentives to projects that will not happen without an incentive.

The telecommunications industry has already invested heavily in South Dakota, based not only on market factors, but on changing technologies, federal regulatory requirements and incentives, and internal strategy. I do not believe Senate Bill 100 is necessary for these investments to continue.

For these reasons, I oppose this bill and ask that you sustain my veto.

Respectfully submitted,
Dennis Dugaard

Handiman looking for work

I can do almost anything from building whatever you need, re-pairing machinery, welding, flooring, installing windows and doors. If you're looking for work to be done around the home or farm, I'm your guy. Call me at 605/228-4172.

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Gov. Daugaard Vetoes SB 96

PIERRE, S.D. – Gov. Dennis Daugaard has vetoed the following bill:

SB 96 – An Act to revise the expense reimbursement for members of the Board of Pardons and Paroles.

For more information about this bill and other bills, visit legis.sd.gov.

-30-

Note: A copy of the Governor's veto message follows:

March 25, 2016

The Honorable Matt Michels
President of the Senate
500 East Capitol Avenue
Pierre, SD 57501

Dear Mr. President and Members of the Senate,

I respectfully return to you Senate Bill 96, with my VETO.

Senate Bill 96 is an Act to revise the reimbursement for members of the Board of Pardons and Paroles.

The bill, in its original form, would have increased compensation for members of the Board of Pardons and Paroles by raising the per diem paid to the members from \$75 to a minimum of \$200 per day. However, an amendment to the bill set a fixed per diem allowance. The final bill pays Board members a certain per diem, all of which is taxable, and limits the ability of the Department of Corrections to handle unexpected lodging costs.

Under current law, Board members are reimbursed a per diem for the day, which is taxable, plus given stipends for meals and lodging, which are not taxable. In the event lodging cannot be procured at the state rate, the Department of Corrections has the ability to request a waiver from the State Auditor to cover the higher rate. Under

Senate Bill 96, Board members would be given a fixed per diem, that while larger than their current per diem, is taxable and cannot be adjusted for higher lodging rates. In certain circumstances, Board members will be receiving less overall compensation from the state under Senate Bill 96 than under the current system.

Because I appreciate the work of this important board and have great respect for the dedication of its members, I do not believe we should burden the members with increased paperwork, increased taxes, and less overall compensation.

For these reasons, I oppose this bill and ask that you sustain my veto.

Respectfully submitted,
Dennis Daugaard



We now accept



for out patient therapy.

**1106 N 2nd St., Groton
605/397-2365**

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Findings report to be given March 29th

Representatives from Foster, Jacobs, and Johnson, Inc. will be hosting a public meeting on Tuesday, March 29th at 7:00 PM in the Groton Area High School computer lab to share the findings of their Values Definition and Educational Adequacy studies completed as part of the Groton Area School Board's long-range planning commitment. All members of the public are invited to attend.

City of Columbia has opening for city finance officer and city maintenance worker. Call at 396-2655 apply before April 4th application deadline.

Come and go bridal shower for Sarah Geary, bride-to-be of Sam Thorson, Saturday, April 23, 10 a.m., St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church, Groton. The couple is registered at Bed Bath and Beyond and at Target.

The Livestream logo features a red and white stylized 'L' icon to the left of the word 'livestream' in a lowercase, sans-serif font.The Dollar General logo consists of the words 'DOLLAR GENERAL' in a bold, uppercase, sans-serif font, centered within a yellow rounded rectangular background.

Special Exception Hearing
Monday, March 28th, 7 p.m.
Groton Community Center
If you can't make it to the hearing, watch it live on

gdilive.com



Michael J. Fitzmaurice and the New State Veterans Home

Until he went abroad to serve his country, Michael J. Fitzmaurice had never left the Dakotas. Fitzmaurice was born in Jamestown, North Dakota, and grew up in South Dakota. Coming from a family with a history of serving, Michael carried on the tradition by joining the Army in 1969.

On March 23, 1971, Michael was on the ground at a Marine base in Khe Sanh, South Vietnam. When an enemy soldier threw three grenades into Michael's bunker, Michael threw two of the explosives out and then used his body to cover the blast of the third. Absorbing the blast to shield the other soldiers left him seriously wounded and partially blinded.

Michael then charged out of the bunker. Figuring he wouldn't survive the engagement, he wanted to do what he could to protect his fellow soldiers. As he was fighting, his weapon was destroyed by another grenade. Unable to find another weapon, Michael resorted to hand-to-hand combat and successfully took down a number of adversaries.

In sustaining the blast from the grenade and refusing to be evacuated until the battle was finished, Michael saved multiple lives that day. He later received the Medal of Honor for his acts of heroism.

I am reminded of this story as we are preparing to cut the ribbon on the new state veterans home in Hot Springs, which has been named after Michael J. Fitzmaurice.

Overcoming a few setbacks along the way, the home has been completed on time, under budget, and it's debt-free.

The new 133,000-square-foot facility contains 76 nursing care beds and 24 residential beds, and is home to World War II, Korean War, Vietnam and peace time veterans. The residential areas of the veterans home are divided into eight neighborhoods. Each neighborhood has its own laundry room, living room, dining room, kitchen and whirlpool suite. Elsewhere in the building, residents have an in-house library, mini mart, barber shop and beauty salon, post office, pharmacy, bistro and chapel.

This first-class facility is exactly what our veterans deserve. The layout of the building will give residents more privacy and control over their lives. It will be a normalized environment where residents can do their own cooking and shopping, and where they can socialize or keep to themselves as they please. It is an outstanding facility named for a remarkable man.

Of his acts of bravery Michael later said, "I don't know what made me do it. I was just doing the job that I was supposed to be doing and I do not regret it a bit. I guess your friends aren't only your friends. They're almost like brothers. I'm glad that they can still be alive and enjoy the rest of their life."

Now, at the new state veterans home that carries this local patriot's name, South Dakota's veterans not only have a nice place to live, but a home where they can "enjoy the rest of their life."

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Today in Weather History

March 26, 1977: During an early morning, severe weather event, hail up to 1.75 inches in diameter fell 1 mile NE of Watertown in Codington County. In addition, hail up to 1.50 inches in diameter fell in Milbank, Grant County.

March 26, 1995: Heavy snow fell over most of central South Dakota, as well as in the northern Black Hills. Heavier accumulations included 14 inches at Murdo, 13 inches at Lead, and 12 inches at Eureka, and Leola. Only a few traffic accidents were reported, although many other vehicles slid into ditches. There was some damage to power lines and poles. Some livestock losses were feared, as the snow fell during the calving season, although this could not be assessed in the short term.

March 26, 2008: An area of low pressure moving across the Northern Plains brought strong lift and heavy snow from 6 to 15 inches in a band across much of central and northeast South Dakota from the evening to the early morning hours. Schools were delayed or cancelled and road travel was difficult, if not impossible. Some snowfall amounts included: 6 inches at Stephan, Willow Lake, Harrold, Miller, and near Hoven; 7 inches at Hayti, east of Hayes, and Eagle Butte; 8 inches at Highmore and Doland; 9 inches at Orient, Bryant, and near Onida; 10 inches at Gettysburg and Faulkton; 11 inches at Seneca and Redfield. Locations with a foot or more of snowfall included: 12 inches 23 miles north of Highmore; 13 inches near Agar; 15 inches 24 miles north of Highmore.

1913 - The Ohio River Basin flood reached a peak. Ten inch rains over a wide area of the Ohio River Basin inundated cities in Ohio, drowning 467 persons, and causing 147 million dollars damage. The Miami River at Dayton reached a level eight feet higher than ever before. The flood, caused by warm weather and heavy rains, was the second mostly deadly of record for the nation. (David Ludlum)

1948: Good Friday tornadoes moved from Terre Haute to Redkey, Indiana killing 20 people. About 80% of the town of Coatesville was destroyed, and 16 people were killed. The Coatesville Carnegie Library was a total loss. The path was a half mile wide.

1954 - The temperature at Allaket, AK, plunged to 69 degrees below zero. (The Weather Channel)

1971 - Parts of northern and central Georgia experienced their worst snow and ice storm since 1935. Two day power outages ruined two million eggs at poultry hatches. Two persons were killed when a tree landed on their car. (25th-26th) (The Weather Channel)

1987 - A cold front crossing the Plateau Region produced high winds in Utah causing some property damage. Winds gusted to 51 mph at Salt Lake City. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Twenty cities in the southwestern U.S. reported new record high temperatures for the date. Afternoon highs of 73 degrees at Flagstaff AZ, 90 degrees at Sacramento CA, 95 degrees at Santa Maria CA, 95 degrees at Los Angeles CA, 99 degrees at Tucson AZ, and 100 degrees at Phoenix AZ set records for March. (The National Weather Summary)








1989 - The Easter Bunny brought record warm temperatures to the central U.S. while such records were still welcome. A dozen cities reported record warm readings, including Dodge City KS with an afternoon high of 88 degrees. Strong southerly winds gusted to 51 mph at Dodge City, and reached 55 mph at Salina KS. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 - Fair weather prevailed across the nation for the second day in a row. Freezing temperatures were reported in the Middle Atlantic Coast Region in the wake of an early spring snowstorm. Afternoon highs were again in the 70s and 80s in the southeastern U.S., and for the ninth day in a row, temperatures in the southwestern U.S. reached the 90s. (The National Weather Summary)

2009: The proof is in the pudding - A NOAA Weather Radio can save your life. Near Belk, AL, a family was alerted to a tornado by their weather radio; they went to their storm cellar. They heard the "jet roar" of the EF1 tornado as it damaged their home; they were unhurt.

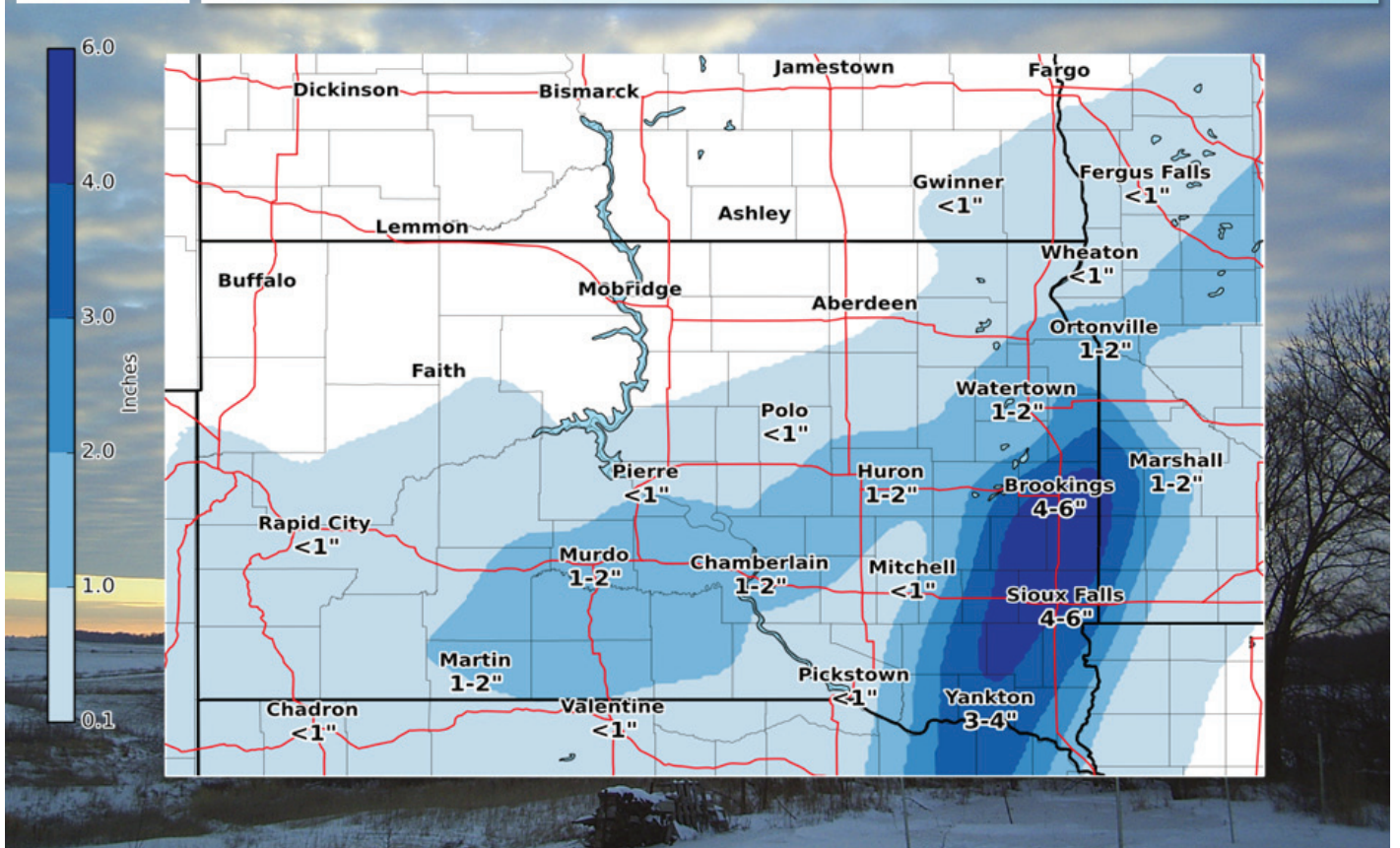
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Today	Tonight	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday	Monday Night	Tuesday
						
Mostly Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny	Mostly Cloudy	Slight Chance Rain
High: 42 °F	Low: 19 °F	High: 57 °F	Low: 27 °F	High: 61 °F	Low: 36 °F	High: 62 °F



Snow Expected Southeast SD/Western MN Dry & Mild Sunday



Published on: 03/26/2016 at 5:19AM

Moisture remains stalled between eastern into south central South Dakota which will generate some light snow this morning. another weak wave will move across the region this afternoon and evening - helping to generate more widespread snow along the I29 corridor south of Watertown.

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Yesterday's Weather

High: 51.7 at 3:32 PM

Low: 29.0 at 11:53 PM

High Gust: 29 at 7:06 PM

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 76° in 1905

Record Low: -13 in 1964

Average High: 45°F

Average Low: 24°F

Average Precip in March.: 0.92

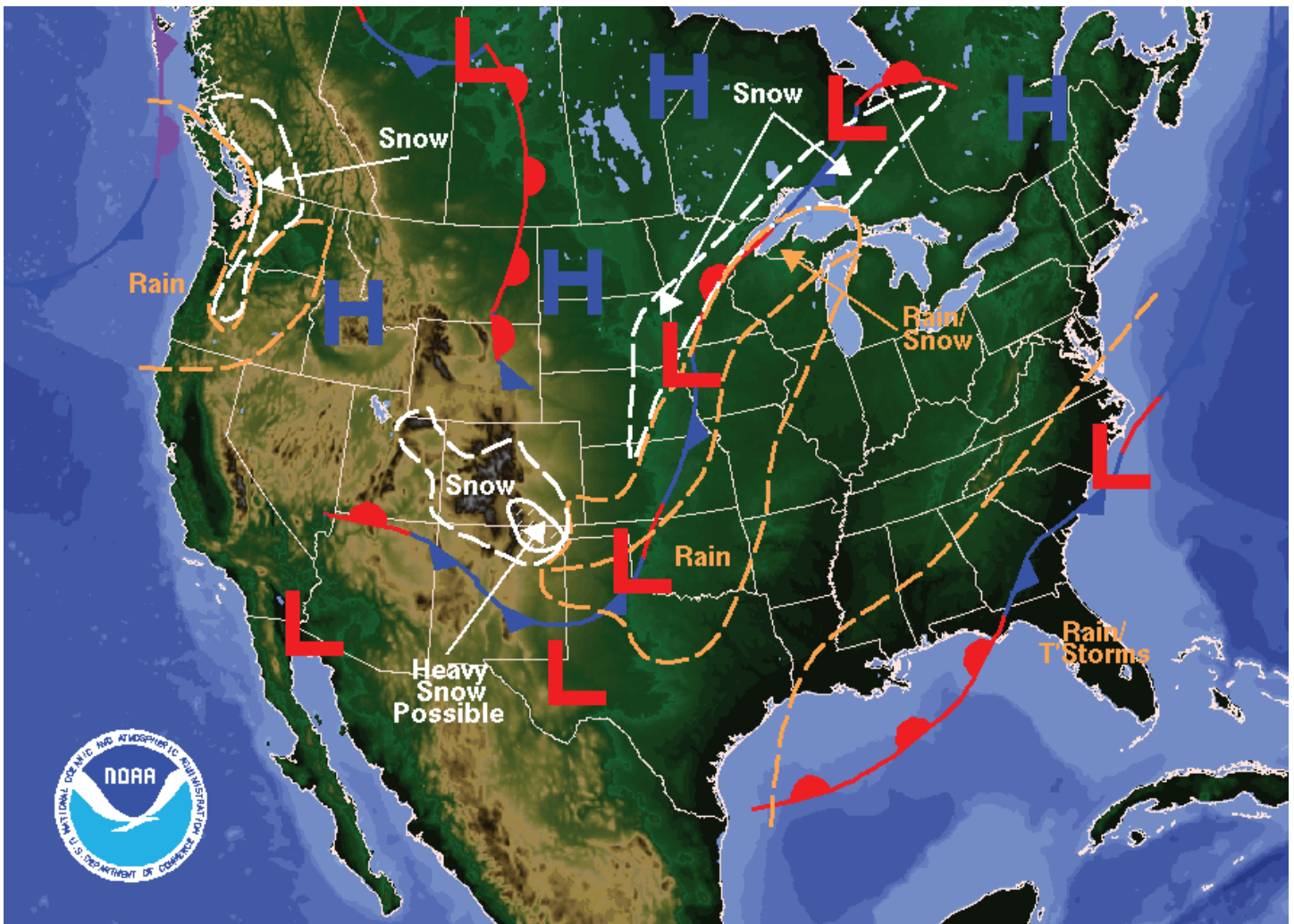
Precip to date in March.: 0.35

Average Precip to date: 1.94

Precip Year to Date: 0.95

Sunset Tonight: 7:54 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:22 a.m.



Weather Forecast for Sat, Mar 26, 2016, issued 4:29 AM EDT
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by Krekeler based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts

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THE FIRST EASTER PARADE

Constantine the Great is credited with being the originator of the Easter Parade. It began on the first Easter Sunday following his conversion. On that day, he ordered the members of his court to wear their finest garments to honor and celebrate the resurrection of Christ.

What will we wear for our Easter garments this year? New clothes covering an old nature? Costly garments hiding a deceitful heart? Changing our apparel will not change our attitudes or our actions.

When we walk with the Lord, He will make all things new from the inside out. He is able to change our old nature into one of His making, a deceitful heart into one devoted to loving Him and our stale thoughts into fresh new insights into the way He wants us to live.

When we turn our lives over to the Lord, we will not need to worry about what we wear or where we walk in a parade. We will be covered with His grace, demonstrate His goodness and reflect His greatness wherever we are.

Prayer: Lord, sometimes it is easier to dress the part than to live the part of being a Christian. I ask that You give me the strength to live my life through the power that comes from the Holy Spirit: in Your Name. Amen.

Scripture for Today: Colossians 3:1-14 And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.

Lady Vols' NCAA run continues with 78-62 win over Buckeyes

ERIC OLSON, AP Sports Writer

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Tennessee is looking like, well, Tennessee again.

Mercedes Russell scored a career-high 25 points and grabbed 15 rebounds and the seventh-seeded Lady Vols continued their surprising run in the women's NCAA Tournament with a 78-62 victory over Ohio State in a Sioux Falls Regional semifinal Friday night.

The surge comes after Tennessee's worst regular season in program history. The Lady Vols (22-13) started the season ranked No. 4 in the country and ended up in seventh place in the SEC. Now they're in a regional final for the fifth time in six years and will play Sunday against No. 4 Syracuse, which stunned top-seeded South Carolina 80-72 in the first semifinal.

"We talk a lot about this as a new season," Tennessee coach Holly Warlick said. "These kids come to Tennessee because of our tradition, but they have to make their own legacy. So we talk a lot about not focusing on the past or what's ahead of us in the future. Just stay in this moment, and I think that's what they've done.

"It's up to us to carry that on. These young ladies have always understood it, but they're doing something about it."

Russell and fellow post player Bashaara Graves combined to make their first 13 shots from the field before Russell missed a tough one in the middle of the third quarter. The two combined for 22 of the Lady Vols' first 28 points as they got out to a 43-35 halftime lead.

"They got off to such a great start around the basket, it shook us," Ohio State coach Kevin McGuff said.

Russell finished 12 for 16 from the field, and Graves, who was 6 for 9, had 14 points and nine rebounds. Te'a Cooper added 16 points and Jaime Nared had 11 rebounds.

Tennessee outrebounded the Buckeyes 53-26 and outscored them 50-22 in the paint in the follow-up to its upset of No. 2 seed Arizona State.

"Honestly, it wasn't that easy," Russell said. "Us being aggressive helped us a lot, especially in the first quarter when they pressed us. Passing and attacking off the dribble was great for us."

Ameryst Alston led the Buckeyes (26-8) with 21 points and Kelsey Mitchell had 20 while playing all 40 minutes.

Tennessee led by as many as 22 points against a short-handed Ohio State team that stuck with a six-player rotation despite having two players with four fouls. The Buckeyes came in without starting guard Cait Craft, who broke her left hand in practice Tuesday, and with Alston still not 100 percent because of a sprained right wrist.

"It's no excuse," McGuff said of the injuries. "Tennessee was great tonight. That was the story. We were a little bit off and didn't play our best game. That had a lot to do with Tennessee. We've had tough injuries, but that's part of the game."

Mitchell, who set an Ohio State NCAA Tournament record with 45 points in Sunday's win over West Virginia and had gone over 40 in three of her previous five games, never found her rhythm. She made only five of 15 shots, including shooting 2 of 9 from 3-point range.

Tennessee had to come back from a 17-point deficit in the last seven minutes to beat Gonzaga in the regional semifinals last year. Not as much sweat was involved this time.

"It took us a long time to jell. We went through injuries, we had new leaders and it just took us along to develop," Warlick said. "The last three games we're really playing well together and as a team. At the beginning of the year, you didn't see that fire we have and that togetherness. We had it in us, it was just about trying to learn more about each other, how to play with each other. I'm excited we're peaking right now at this moment."

TIP-INS

Tennessee: The Lady Vols have won 10 of the last 11 meetings with Ohio State. ... They've won six of

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their last seven after a 2-4 stretch in February. ... The regional final against Syracuse is a rematch of a November game Tennessee won 57-55 at home.

Ohio State: Mitchell came in averaging 30.3 points in four career NCAA Tournament games. ... The Buckeyes committed only seven turnovers while forcing Tennessee into 18.

ABOUT THOSE UPSETS

With Syracuse beating South Carolina and Stanford defeating Notre Dame, two No. 1 seeds went down Friday.

"It shows where women's basketball is headed," Warlick said. "Kids are getting better, they're starting at a younger age. I understand the pressures of Notre Dame and South Carolina. We've been there. You're supposed to win. You weren't supposed to have any challenges. So I get it."

Syracuse women stun South Carolina 80-72 in regional semis

ERIC OLSON, AP Sports Writer

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Syracuse coach Quentin Hillsman delivered a direct message to Brianna Butler at halftime.

"You've got to hit some shots," he told his star guard, "or we're going home."

Butler hit some shots, all right, and Syracuse is staying another couple days in South Dakota after upsetting No. 1 seed South Carolina 80-72 in the Sioux Falls Regional semifinal of the women's NCAA Tournament on Friday night.

Butler scored 10 of her 18 points in the fourth quarter, including the go-ahead 3-pointer with 3:01 left, to send the fourth-seeded Orange to a regional final for the first time. They'll play Ohio State or Tennessee on Sunday.

Syracuse trailed by as many as 13 late in the first half and was still down 11 in the middle of the third quarter before coming back to stun a Gamecocks team that looked destined to make another appearance in the Final Four. South Carolina got into early foul trouble and never could finish off the Orange.

"Even though we did get the lead, we were just off," South Carolina coach Dawn Staley said. "We were just not in sync. They did a good job at winning the game."

Alexis Peterson scored 25 points to lead the Orange (28-7), who won for the 14th time in 15 games. Brittney Sykes added 17 and Briana Day had 13 rebounds.

Alaina Coates had 18 points and 16 rebounds for South Carolina (33-2), whose only other loss was to UConn. A'ja Wilson had 15 points and 10 rebounds, and Tina Roy added 17 points off the bench for the Gamecocks.

Butler, the NCAA active leader in career 3-pointers, made just six of her last 35 attempts from beyond the arc coming into the game, and she got off to a slow start against the Gamecocks. Her pull-up jumper tied it at 61, and her 3-pointer gave the Orange the lead for good after Coates converted an entry pass from Tiffany Mitchell for a two-point lead. Butler's last 3-pointer made it 74-68 with 1:11 left.

"I have to give the credit to my teammates and coaches," Butler said. "They gave me the confidence to come out in the second half and fire. Lex told me they're going to fall. Even Coach gave me the confidence. Even if I was missing, he wanted me to keep shooting."

The Orange's zone defense sagged on star post players Wilson and Coates, giving Roy, Mitchell and Bianca Cuevas open looks from the perimeter. The Gamecocks attempted a season-high 32 3-pointers, but made only eight.

"When we were going through our scout, (Hillsman) said to limit their touches on the inside," Sykes said. "They're going to find a way to get the ball inside, and we had to limit that and guard the perimeter to the best of our ability."

Wilson, Coates and Sarah Imovbioh were a combined 17 for 22 from the field — a telling statistic, Staley said.

"We took the bait," she said. "Our post players are 17 for 22 from the floor, 41 points. Shooting at that percentage, we should have been trying to get that ball inside a lot more than we did."

The Gamecocks came in concerned about dealing with a pressing Syracuse defense that had been forc-

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ing 24.5 turnovers a game, most of any team in the country. The press was hardly a factor.

But with Peterson giving the Orange consistent scoring and Butler ramping up her offense late, the Orange were able to pull off their biggest win ever and avenge the loss to the Gamecocks that ended their season in 2015.

After the final buzzer, Peterson went to mid-court and took a bow, and then Day picked her up and carried her to where their teammates were celebrating.

TIP-INS

Syracuse: Butler has started all 132 games of her career, tying the school record. ... The Orange's 28 wins are a school record.

South Carolina: Wilson, who leads the SEC with 3.1 blocks a game, swatted three shots and had four steals ... The Gamecocks came in having outscored their opponents in 101 of 136 quarters.

HOW FAR THEY'VE COME

Hillsman offered some perspective on how far his program has come since he took over in 2006.

"My first game coaching at Syracuse, it was an exhibition game and we lost in double overtime," he said. "I remember going home thinking, 'This is my last year. I'm quitting. This is too much.' From that point forward, we had to get players and build our program piece by piece. I take no credit. I'm not confused. You have to get good players and they have to play for you."

SO LONG, SENIORS

The Gamecocks say goodbye to five seniors, including starters in Mitchell, Asia Dozier and Khadijah Sessions.

"I told our players, 'If you're hurting, if you're crying because you're saying goodbye to our seniors, great,'" Staley said.

She said the returning players better dedicate themselves to doing the work so they won't be crying at this time next season, "to ensure that this doesn't take place prematurely anymore."

Federal oil, gas leases stall over bird concerns in US West

MATTHEW BROWN, Associated Press

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP) — Concerns over a bird that ranges across the American West continue to delay federal oil and gas lease sales, five months after Interior Secretary Sally Jewell proclaimed the Obama administration had found a way to balance drilling and conservation.

The Interior Department said it will defer the sale of almost 60,000 acres of leases that were nominated by companies in eastern Montana as the agency works on new policies for greater sage grouse.

More than 8 million acres of leases previously were deferred in Colorado, Utah, Nevada, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wyoming. It remains unclear when those will be freed up for sales or removed from consideration.

Jewell said in September that Endangered Species Act protections were not needed for the grouse, a chicken-sized bird that inhabits sage brush ecosystems spread across 11 Western states. Grouse numbers declined significantly over the past several decades because of the loss of habitat.

Officials said the decision to forgo protections avoided the need for draconian restrictions on drilling, livestock grazing and other activities that help drive the region's economy.

It followed a sweeping overhaul of federal public land management plans to limit drilling near grouse breeding areas and allowing oil and gas exploration to proceed elsewhere.

The U.S. Bureau of Land Management still is crafting policies to put those plans into effect, agency spokesman Al Nash said. Completion of that work is several months away, he said.

A lawsuit challenging the plans as too weak is pending in U.S. District Court in Idaho. Environmental groups behind the lawsuit contend the land plans are riddled with loopholes that could further drive down the bird's numbers.

Erik Molvar with WildEarth Guardians said the block on new leases over the past several years — coupled with low oil and gas prices — was doing more to protect grouse than any other factor.

But state officials who applauded Jewell's September announcement said there's no need to delay any

longer on those sales.

"Leasing falls short of development," said Tim Baker, natural resources adviser to Montana Gov. Steve Bullock, a Democrat. He added that any concerns could be addressed before drilling occurs, by adding conditions to leases before they are issued.

Montana Petroleum Association executive director Alan Olson said the lease deferrals represent "more excuses" to block development on public lands.

The Bureau of Land Management was moving forward with plans to sell leases on as many as 93 parcels totaling almost 20,100 acres during an Oct. 18 auction. Those are outside sage brush habitat, but had been deferred until the land management plans were completed, Nash said.

"Each respective plan talks at great length about the need for us to address concerns about the habitat," he said. "But the guidance we're going to get goes into detail on how we move forward."

Daugaard signs measure to allow tax credits for scholarships

JAMES NORD, Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota insurance companies would get tax credits for donating to private-school scholarships under a measure Gov. Dennis Daugaard signed into law Friday, providing the financial backing for a school-choice program that supporters say gives parents an opportunity to be more active in the education of their children.

The measure was one of more than a dozen of the final bills that Daugaard acted on before lawmakers return to Pierre next week for the last day of the 2016 session. They're set to consider the governor's three outright vetoes and to weigh style-and-form vetoes of two other measures.

Backers of the new school choice law cheered the Republican governor's decision.

"I've got such a great sense of gratitude," said GOP Sen. Phyllis Heineman, a main sponsor of the bill. "Now, we've got to make the program a success."

With Daugaard's signature, South Dakota joins more than a dozen states that have tax credit school choice laws.

Insurance companies can get an 80 percent tax credit for total contributions to a grant organization that would provide the scholarships. The total amount of credits is capped at \$2 million each budget year.

Heineman has said the tax credits are aimed at businesses that pay an insurance company tax because it is a stable source of revenue that shows consistent growth. She said work now shifts to setting up a scholarship granting organization and contacting insurance companies with the goal of having scholarships available for the upcoming school year.

Students under the South Dakota program will be eligible for the scholarships if their families the year before made up to 150 percent of the income standard used to qualify for free or reduced-price lunch, among other conditions.

But public education advocates opposed the measure, saying that the state has an obligation to provide public education and that the measure could unconstitutionally direct public funds to religious schools.

Critics also worry that it could lay the groundwork for a larger program that would siphon a significant number of students and support from public schools in the future.

"Who's next in line to ask for a tax credit?" said Rob Monson, executive director at School Administrators of South Dakota.

Also Friday, the governor vetoed a plan that would have offered tax incentives to put in buffer strips between cropland and waterways. Both legislative chambers had approved the measure with margins that suggest the veto could be overridden.

The bill would allow farmland along a lake, river or stream that has been turned into a 50-foot buffer strip of vegetation to be classified as non-cropland for property tax purposes, which would mean a lower tax burden for those landowners.

Buffers help trap fertilizers, pesticides and sediments before they reach a waterway.

Daugaard said in his veto message that he's concerned in part that it's unconstitutional and that it would

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shift the property tax burden from people taking advantage of the plan onto other property owners.

"I would hope that everybody maintains the vote they had the first time," said Democratic Sen. Jason Frerichs, a supporter of the bill. "I'm very confident."

Rep. Noem invites high school students to enter art contest

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Budding young artists from South Dakota have a chance to display their work at the U.S. Capitol.

U.S. Rep. Kristi Noem says high school students from across the state can now enter their artwork to the 2016 Congressional Art Competition.

The competition began in 1982, and each congressional district has one winner. The selected artwork is displayed at the U.S. Capitol for an entire year, and winners are also invited to a reception in Washington, D.C.

The second-place winning entry from South Dakota will be displayed in Noem's office in the nation's capital. All artwork submissions must be sent to the South Dakota Arts Council by April 19. Artwork must be original in concept, design and execution.

The South Dakota winners will be notified April 22.

USDA: South Dakota's hog and pig numbers up 7 percent

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The U.S. Department of Agriculture says the number of hogs and pigs in the state is up 7 percent from the same time last year.

The latest report from the National Agricultural Statistics Service says there were 1.4 million head on March 1, a 7 percent increase over the same time last year and a 3 percent increase over Dec. 1, 2015.

The breeding hog inventory of 190,000 is a 15 percent increase over the same time last year, while the 1.21 million market hogs are a 6 percent jump.

The December 2015 to February 2016 pig crop of 1,021,000 head was up 11 percent from 2015. Sows farrowed during the period totaled 95,000 head, up 12 percent from last year.

South Dakota hog producers intend to farrow 96,000 sows during the March-May 2016 quarter.

Daugaard vetoes bill offering tax breaks for buffer strips

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Gov. Dennis Daugaard has vetoed a bill that that would have offered landowners tax breaks for putting in buffer strips of vegetation between farm fields and waterways.

The Republican governor rejected the bill Friday, saying that he's concerned it's unconstitutional and that it would shift the property tax burden onto other property owners.

Supporters say it was meant to improve water quality.

The bill would have allowed farmland along a waterway turned into a 50-foot buffer strip of vegetation to be classified as non-cropland for property tax purposes. That would have meant a lower tax burden for those landowners.

Supporters still have a shot at passing the bill when lawmakers convene next week to consider gubernatorial vetoes.

Legislators approved the measure with margins that suggest the veto could be overridden.

Gov. Dennis Daugaard signs tax credit school choice measure

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Gov. Dennis Daugaard has signed into law a school choice measure that offers tax credits to insurance companies for private school scholarship donations.

Daugaard signed the bill Friday.

Supporters say the law gives parents the opportunity to make a choice about where they want their children to go to school.

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Public education advocates opposed it, saying that the state has an obligation to provide public education and that the measure could unconstitutionally direct public funds to religious schools.

Boosters say case law supports that tax credits are not public funds and don't violate the prohibition.

Insurance companies can get an 80 percent tax credit for total contributions to a grant organization that would award the scholarships. The total amount of credits would be capped at \$2 million each budget year.

Game, Fish and Parks names next state parks director

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A regional parks supervisor has been named South Dakota's next state parks director. South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks announced Friday that Katie Ceroll will serve as division director of parks and recreation beginning April 4. Current Director Doug Hofer is retiring April 1 after 44 years of public service.

Ceroll has served as a regional parks supervisor for the northeast-area state parks and recreation areas since 2014. She's a native of rural Beresford.

Air Force to test water at South Dakota base

ELLSWORTH AIR FORCE BASE, S.D. (AP) — The U.S. Air Force plans to test groundwater at its Ellsworth base after federal regulators warned training scenarios may have polluted it.

KOTA-TV reported Thursday (<http://bit.ly/1UNskna>) that the Environmental Protection Agency believes perfluorinated compounds in foam used in military firefighter training may have contaminated the water. Testing will begin in October.

Air Force officials believe the foam might have been used at 200 installations. Thirty bases have been tested so far with four showing drinking water sources with compound levels above the EPA limit. Those four bases are located in New Hampshire, New York, Pennsylvania and Alaska.

The Air Force has limited the use of the foam to actual emergencies and is replacing it with a cleaner version.

South Dakota Highway Patrol trooper up for national award

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A South Dakota Highway Patrol trooper has been nominated for a national award for his efforts in saving two people last October.

Trooper James Tedder is one of four finalists for the 2015 International Association of Chiefs of Police Motorola Trooper of the Year award. The winner will be honored April 1 in Washington, D.C.

Tedder is stationed in Webster. He's nominated for saving two vehicle chase suspects who drove into water, swam away from their vehicle and became fatigued in the cold water.

Tedder is a 10-year veteran of the Highway Patrol. The patrol last December honored him with a life-saving award.

2 Indiana bakeries feud over 4-sided doughnuts

MERRILLVILLE, Ind. (AP) — Two Indiana bakeries share a love for four-sided doughnuts but one of them believes there is room for only one square doughnut-maker.

According to the Post-Tribune (<http://trib.in/1RIkKxR>), Valparaiso-based Family Express asked a court Thursday to declare that it can continue to call its products "Square Donuts."

But Terre Haute-based Square Donuts, which has been making its doughnuts since the 1960s and has nine locations, wants Family Express to cut it out.

Family Express started making its version in 2005, and a year later, Square Donuts sent Family Express a cease-and-desist letter.

The low-level disagreement fermented quietly for several years until Square Donuts in 2013 trademarked its name.

Family Express contacted Square Donuts to try to reach an agreement over the name but those talks went nowhere.

Law enforcement investigators seek out private DNA databases

PAUL ELIAS, Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Investigators are broadening their DNA searches beyond government databases and demanding genetic information from companies that do ancestry research for their customers.

Two major companies that research family lineage for fees around \$200 say that over the last two years, they have received law enforcement demands for genetic information stored in their DNA databases.

Ancestry.com and competitor 23andme report a total of five requests from law agencies for the genetic material of six individuals in their growing databases of hundreds of thousands. Ancestry.com turned over one person's data for an investigation into the murder and rape of an 18-year-old woman in Idaho Falls, Idaho. 23andme has received four other court orders but persuaded investigators to withdraw the requests.

The companies say law enforcement demands for genetic information are rare.

But privacy advocates and experts are concerned that genetic information turned over for medical, family history research or other highly personal reasons could be misused by investigators— and that the few known cases could be the start of a trend.

"There will be more requests as time goes on and the technology evolves," said New York University law professor Erin Murphy, author of "Inside The Cell: The Dark Side of Forensic DNA."

Law enforcement agencies across the country have access to growing state and national databases with millions of genetic samples of convicted offenders and arrestees.

Investigators compare DNA found at crime scenes against the genetic samples in the government databases. They look at 13 distinct locations in a DNA sample, seeking exact matches at each location to pair a suspect with genetic material at the crime scene.

Ancestry.com and 23andme officials say their databases won't be useful to most criminal investigations because they analyze regions of DNA different from the locations forensic experts explore. Still, that hasn't stopped investigators stumped on cold cases from contacting the companies for help.

In the summer of 2014, court documents show, the Idaho Falls Police Department obtained a warrant to seize genetic information from Ancestry.com in connection with the 1996 rape and murder of Angie Dodge.

In 1998, Christopher Tapp was sentenced to life in prison for Dodge's murder and rape, but he's appealing his conviction saying his confession was coerced. Police are still working the case at the insistence of Dodge's mother and others because the only DNA found on her body was not Tapp's and investigators believe another suspect also was involved.

Idaho Falls police sent the DNA sample to Ancestry.com in 2014 to process. Ancestry emailed the results to the police without naming anyone in the company's database, which was only partially accessible to the public.

The results, however, established a close, though not exact, match. Believing the killer could be a relative of the DNA donor, police obtained a warrant to compel the company to turn over the donor's name.

"The hurdles for this should be extremely high, like getting a warrant for a wiretap, because it is an invasion of privacy," said Greg Hampikian, a Boise State University biology professor and forensic DNA expert assisting with efforts to exonerate Tapp.

Hampikian said there has to be "a compelling public safety issue" and judge's approval before calling on companies to turn over genetic information.

"In this case, there is a killer-rapist still out there and a man in prison for murder claiming innocence," Hampikian said.

The donor was Michael Usry Sr., a contractor living near Jackson, Mississippi.

Ten years earlier, thinking he was helping further the Mormon Church's deep interest in genetic research, Usry donated his DNA to a nonprofit scientific organization conducting a hereditary study.

The Sorenson Molecular Genealogy Foundation was launched by billionaire Utah businessman James LeVoy Sorenson with the backing of the church. The foundation's goal was finding a "genetic blueprint" for humans, and it amassed more than 100,000 samples when Ancestry acquired the database in 2007.

Usry was not the right age for the 20-something suspect investigators were seeking. But his son was

the approximate age and had connections to the Idaho Falls area.

Police showed up at Michael Usry Jr.'s doorstep in New Orleans in December 2014, armed with a warrant for his DNA.

The younger Usry, a filmmaker, was interrogated for six hours and finally gave blood for a DNA sample. For the next month, he remained under suspicion until his DNA was determined not to match the samples taken from the crime scene.

Now Usry Jr. says he is making a documentary about his experience. "It was disconcerting," he said. "It was a very weird situation."

Idaho Falls Police Department spokeswoman Joelyn Hansen said the investigator who obtained the warrant has retired and no one else in the department "felt comfortable" discussing the warrant.

After media reports about the Usrys' experience, Ancestry and 23andme each said they turn over customer genetic data only under court order. Both companies announced publication of "transparency" reports that disclose the number of warrants and subpoenas from law agencies.

"Privacy is our primary concern," said 23andme privacy officer Kate Black, who said the company has never turned over genetic information despite receiving four court orders. But Black said 23andme has so far convinced investigators that the company's data won't help with their cases — and the agencies have withdrawn their demands.

Ancestry says the only request it received was for Usry's information. The company has since removed the Sorenson database from public view.

"It does bother me that Sorenson sold that information after they told me it wouldn't be shared," the elder Usry said. "It does bother me that my DNA was used in this."

Wrong number? Trump's TV telephone interviews in spotlight

DAVID BAUDER, AP Television Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — In television news, a telephone interview is typically frowned upon. Donald Trump's fondness for them is changing habits and causing consternation in newsrooms, while challenging political traditions.

Two organizations are circulating petitions to encourage Sunday morning political shows to hang up on Trump. Some prominent holdouts, like Fox's Chris Wallace, refuse to do on-air phoners. Others argue that a phone interview is better than no interview at all.

Except in news emergencies, producers usually avoid phoners because television is a visual medium — a face-to-face discussion between a newsmaker and questioner is preferable to a picture of an anchor listening to a disembodied voice.

It's easy to see why Trump likes them. There's no travel or TV makeup involved; if he wishes to, Trump can talk to Matt Lauer without changing out of his pajamas. They often put an interviewer at a disadvantage, since it's harder to interrupt or ask follow-up questions, and impossible to tell if a subject is being coached.

Face-to-face interviews let viewers see a candidate physically react to a tough question and think on his feet, said Chris Licht, executive producer of "CBS This Morning." Sometimes that's as important as what is being said.

Trump tends to take over phone interviews and can get his message out with little challenge, Wallace said. "The Sunday show, in the broadcast landscape, I feel is a gold standard for probing interviews," said Wallace, host of "Fox News Sunday." "The idea that you would do a phone interview, not face-to-face or not by satellite, with a presidential candidate — I'd never seen it before, and I was quite frankly shocked that my competitors were doing it."

Since Trump announced his candidacy in June 2015, Wallace has conducted three in-person interviews with him on "Fox News Sunday," and four via satellite.

Chuck Todd, host of NBC's "Meet the Press," has done phoners with Trump but now said he's decided to stick to in-person interviews on his Sunday show. He's no absolutist, though.

"It's a much better viewer experience when it's in person," Todd said. "Satellite and phoners are a little

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harder, there's no doubt about it. But at the end of the day, you'll take something over nothing."

Morning news shows do phoners most frequently. At the outset of the campaign, Trump was ratings catnip. The ratings impact of a Trump interview has since settled down, but it's still hard to turn him down. He's the leading contender for the Republican presidential nomination. He's news.

There appear to be no network policies; different shows on the same network have different philosophies. Licht has turned Trump down for phoners on CBS but concedes there may be exceptions for breaking news. "CBS This Morning," in fact, aired Trump commenting by phone following Tuesday's attack in Belgium.

Since the campaign began, Trump has appeared for 29 phone interviews on the five Sunday political panel shows, according to the liberal watchdog Media Matters for America. Through last Sunday, ABC's "This Week" has done it 10 times, CBS' "Face the Nation" seven and six times each on "Meet the Press" and CNN's "State of the Union."

None of these shows has done phoners with Ted Cruz, John Kasich, Hillary Clinton or Bernie Sanders, said Media Matters, which is urging that the practice be discontinued.

The activist group MomsRising said the disparity "sends the message that some candidates can play by different rules, without consequences, and that's just un-American." A study by mediaQuant and The New York Times estimated that Trump has received the equivalent of \$1.9 billion in free advertising given the media attention paid to his campaign.

A Trump spokeswoman did not immediately return a request for comment.

What's unclear is whether other candidates were denied opportunities given to Trump.

CNN chief executive Jeff Zucker said Trump opponents frequently turn down interview requests. During an appearance on CNN last week, former GOP candidate Carly Fiorina complained about media attention paid to Trump, leading Anderson Cooper to shoot back: "Donald Trump returned phone calls and was willing to do interviews, which was something your campaign, frankly, was unwilling to do."

Cruz spokeswoman Catherine Frazier tweeted last week that she saw Trump being interviewed via phone on "Fox & Friends" a day after Cruz was told that he couldn't do a phone interview with the show.

Fox said that since then, "Fox & Friends" has offered to conduct a phone interview with Cruz five times and has been turned down each time. Cruz did appear in the studio Wednesday. Frazier did not return requests for comment.

NBC's Todd believes that complaints about phoners are a surrogate for people who want to blame the media for Trump's success.

"You're shooting the messenger while you're ignoring what he is tapping into," he said. "It becomes a little silly when you look at the bigger picture here. The media is getting criticized for interviewing Donald Trump. If we weren't questioning him, we'd be criticized for not questioning him."

For years, cautious candidates have tended to be stingy with press access. Trump is the complete opposite. In a fast-moving information age, he may be changing the expectations for how often a candidate submits to interviews.

Todd doesn't believe it's a coincidence that he's had more access to Clinton during the past six weeks than he had during the six years she was in the Obama administration. Both Clinton and Cruz appeared in phone interviews following the Belgium attacks.

"Trump's opponents fall into two camps: Those who complain and continue to get crushed by the media wave, or those who grab a surfboard and try to ride it," said Mark McKinnon, veteran Republican political operative and co-host of Showtime's political road show, "The Circus."

Analysis: Obama stirs calls for change in Cuba. Can it last?

JOSH LEDERMAN, Associated Press

An AP News Analysis

WASHINGTON (AP) — For a few short days, President Barack Obama was America's man in Havana, his challenges to President Raul Castro stunning Cuban citizens who mused openly in the streets about the possibility of political change.

Obama's public call for a more democratic Cuban future marked a watershed moment in a country where

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questioning the government's authority is not tolerated. Decades of bitterness between leaders seemed to fade as Obama and Castro laughed it up at a baseball game. U.S. businesses were flocking in droves, touting new approval to bring Americans and their dollars to Cuba.

As Obama's aides jubilantly boarded Air Force One, Castro showed up on the tarmac to see Obama off. The White House saw it as an affirmation that the visit was a success, even by Castro's admittedly different standards.

Yet a key question remained unanswered after Obama departed the communist island: How much of it will last?

"We shouldn't kid ourselves that they're going to all of a sudden tolerate dissent," said Michael Posner, Obama's former assistant secretary of state for human rights and democracy. "This is a very ostracized regime. They've been in power a long time. They don't really have any instincts for reform. It's going to be a struggle."

The first clues could come next month during the Communist Party Congress meeting in Havana, a forum for unveiling major changes. An announcement of greater political freedoms or reform-minded economic steps would suggest that Obama's strategy was starting to bear fruit.

Under the glare of global attention, Castro did little to publicly undermine Obama. After all, Obama enjoys immense popularity in Cuba. Images of a young black president strolling through Old Havana seemed to resonate with Cuba's racially diverse people, forming a powerful contrast with the aging Castro.

In the days ahead, though, that public spotlight will dim, giving Castro an opening to return to business as usual should he so choose. Though he's taking modest steps to open up Cuba's economy and relax certain social restrictions, there are still no indications Castro plans to make any of the changes to Cuba's single-party system that Obama advocated.

"We will continue to speak out loudly on the things that we care about," Obama said near the end of his visit.

Central to Obama's strategy is to raise the Cuban people's expectations, driving up pressure on Castro's government to accelerate the pace of change. Wary Cuban officials have picked up on the tactic, with some regarding Obama's entreaties as a post-Cold War attempt to coerce Cuba with diplomacy instead of the threat of force.

Ahead of his trip, Obama's aides said a key goal was to make his rapprochement with Cuba irreversible. He left the island with plenty of indications that tipping point could be in sight.

Soon, as many of 110 commercial flights between the U.S. and Cuba will take off daily, bringing millions of Americans to the country and further exposing Cubans to the outside world. With Americans hungry for a taste of Havana, Obama is banking on the notion that it will be incredibly unpopular for the next president to tell them to cancel their vacations.

Famed U.S. hotel chains Starwood and Marriott are poised to take over hotels in Cuba after striking deals with Havana and getting permission from Washington, and Google is making a major play on the island as well. Brian Chesky, CEO of online lodging service Airbnb, told reporters in Havana that Cuba is his company's fastest-growing market.

"There comes a point where reversing it will seem like a very crazy idea," said former Commerce Secretary Carlos Gutierrez, a Republican who left Cuba as an exile at age six. "I think we're just about at that stage."

Though Obama advanced his goal of normalizing U.S.-Cuba relations, it wasn't without political risk.

His visit was roundly derided by supporters of the U.S. trade embargo, who accused Obama of rewarding a repressive government. It's an issue with resonance in the presidential race, where Republican candidate Ted Cruz, whose father is Cuban, is livid about Obama's policy while front-runner Donald Trump vows to negotiate a better deal.

"Today is a sad day in American history," Cruz said while Obama was in Havana.

Both Democratic candidates, Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders, support Obama's approach.

Obama has also been unable to remove the key irritant for Cuban officials and citizens alike: The U.S. embargo, which has squeezed Cuba's economy for generations. There are few signs Congress will accede

anytime soon to Obama's calls for repealing the sanctions.

Brussels airport closed until at least Tuesday

BRUSSELS (AP) — Brussels airport officials say flights won't resume before Tuesday as they assess the damage caused by twin explosions in the terminal earlier this week.

Authorities have wrapped up their investigation of the crime scene at the airport, and will allow engineers into the building to check its structural safety and information technology systems — and whether any damage can be repaired quickly.

The Brussels Airport Company said Saturday it is "currently studying a temporary solution to partially resume passenger flights, taking into account the new security measures" decided by the federal government.

Brussels Airport handles 23.5 million passengers annually. It links Brussels with 226 destinations worldwide and is served by 77 different airlines.

Protests against Trump risk backlash in GOP primary

NICHOLAS RICCARDI, Associated Press

FOUNTAIN HILLS, Ariz. (AP) — David Rau wasn't sure about Donald Trump. So the landscape contractor strolled over to the main park in this Phoenix suburb to watch one of the businessman's recent rallies and decide for himself.

Demonstrators pulled their cars across an access road to block people driving to the event. Dozens marched to the park and stood by Rau, chanting "Stop the hate!" as he tried to listen. He left a Trump convert. "I've got the right to listen to somebody speak, don't I?" Rau asked.

Trump's rise in the Republican presidential contest has sparked increasingly confrontational protests, mobilized his opponents and drawn scrutiny of the GOP front-runner's rhetoric and the sometimes rough way his campaign handles dissent. But as demonstrators escalate their tactics, they also risk helping Trump, especially among Republican voters his rivals are furiously trying to persuade to reject the billionaire businessman.

"I encourage people to speak out against Trump in a forceful but respectful manner because some of these protests are only serving to help him," said Tim Miller, a spokesman for a Republican group trying to stop Trump. "He continues to dominate the news, he can play the 'us vs. them' card when liberals disrupt his events and that serves as a rallying point for his candidacy."

Even Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, running for the Democratic presidential nomination, has been troubled by protesters' tactics, as well as by Trump's response.

"In America, people have a right to hold rallies," Sanders told MSNBC. "It is absolutely appropriate for thousands of people to protest at a Trump rally, but I am not a great fan of disrupting rallies."

Trump engages the demonstrators vigorously, mocking them, calling them bad people and sometimes feeding the anger of his supporters in the crowd.

The Phoenix demonstration followed one in Chicago the prior weekend, when hundreds of Trump foes flooded into the Chicago location of one of his rallies and Trump canceled the event and one in Ohio the following day, citing security concerns. That infuriated Trump backers, who blamed the demonstrators.

"To me, it's disgusting and insulting," said Claudia Young, an Argentinian-born U.S. citizen in Muncie, Indiana, who said she and her husband had arrived at the Dayton, Ohio, rally site at 6:30 a.m. after a 90-minute drive. "We're supposed to have freedom of speech in this country, but the people who came to see Trump couldn't listen to what they wanted to hear."

In Arizona, activists gathered about 3 miles from the site of the Trump rally, along one of two roads that wind through the mountains north of Phoenix into central Fountain Hills. The protesters — mainly a coalition of local immigrant rights groups who have a long history of demonstrations against Sheriff Joe Arpaio, who was speaking at the rally — then maneuvered their cars across the intersection. Three were arrested, and many Trump supporters had to walk to the rally or missed it.

Carlos Garcia of Puente, one of the immigrant right groups, said demonstrators handed out water bottles

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to Trump supporters and did not want to antagonize them.

"I hope people see beyond their two-hour inconvenience," he said, adding that activists were motivated by the support Trump has drawn from Arpaio and former Arizona Gov. Jan Brewer. "Their rhetoric," he said of that duo, "turned into policies that destroyed thousands of families, and we see Trump trying to go national with it. People are willing to put their bodies on the line to keep their families together."

When Garcia and other demonstrators made it to the park where Trump was holding his rally they were met with jeers and cries from Trump supporters gathered on the hillside, outside the fenced-off perimeter where the event was occurring. "Learn to speak English!" one person yelled at the protesters. "Gotta get off the welfare check," called another.

The demonstrators chanted back: "Stop the hate!" Despite some heated scums, no fights broke out and eventually the candidate finished and protesters and supporters alike trickled away.

Sharon Groves, a 69-year-old retired social worker, came to the rally with a group of Fountain Hills' few other liberals. The crowd spilled out from the controlled area onto a hillside where Groves stood silently wearing a shirt that read "Prays well with others" and included symbols of world religions. Some other demonstrators silently held up homemade signs that read: "Love Trumps Hate."

Afterward, Groves was horrified at the demonstrators who blocked traffic and then marched in. "It was uncalled for," Groves said. "People have the right to come and see him if they want to."

Rolling Stones unleash rock and roll on massive Cuban crowd

MICHAEL WEISSENSTEIN, Associated Press

HAVANA (AP) — The Rolling Stones unleashed two hours of shrieking, thundering rock and roll on an ecstatic crowd of hundreds of thousands of Cubans and foreign visitors Friday night, capping one of the most momentous weeks in modern Cuban history with a massive celebration of music that was once forbidden here.

The week opened with the arrival of President Barack Obama in Air Force One, accompanied by more than 1,000 employees of a government that waged a cold war against Cuba for more than 50 years. This time, U.S. forces were armed with briefing books and press invitations, here to seal the president's 2014 opening to Cuba with a string of expertly crafted public events that saw Obama call for democracy live on state television, then attend a Major League Baseball exhibition game with Cuban President Raul Castro.

The week ended with Mick Jagger, Keith Richards, Ronnie Wood and Charlie Watts firing "Jumpin' Jack Flash" "Sympathy for the Devil" and "Satisfaction" into a jubilant crowd from 3-story-tall high-definition television screens and thumping towers of speakers.

From Sunday evening to late Friday night, it felt as if the full force of the 21st century had landed with bone-rattling impact on an island that still feels mostly cut off from the modern world.

"Havana, Cuba, and the Rolling Stones!" Jagger cried. "This is amazing! It's really good to be here! It's good to see you guys!"

The Stones romped through 18 of their classics, picking up force as the crowd in the open-air Ciudad Deportiva, or Sports City, jumped and chanted "Rollings! Rollings!"

The Rolling Stones were the biggest mainstream rock act to play in Cuba since its 1959 revolution brought a communist government to power and isolated the island from the United States and its allies. At its heyday, Cuba's communist government frowned on U.S. and British bands. Fans had to hide their Beatles and Stones albums in covers borrowed from albums of appropriately revolutionary Cuban groups.

But times have changed. Former supermodel Naomi Campbell, actor Richard Gere and singer Jimmy Buffet partied in the VIP section of the concert. Castro's son Alejandro, one of the driving forces behind Cuba's declaration of detente with the United States, greeted friends and relatives after the show.

Far from the Cuban and international elites, ordinary Cubans said they felt shot through with energy, reconnected with the world.

"After today I can die," said 62-year-old night watchman Joaquin Ortiz. "This is like my last wish, seeing the Rolling Stones."

Rivers of spectators flowed north and south from the concert site after the show, watched over by

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hundreds, perhaps thousands, of security officials.

Few were willing to comment on the connections between the concert and Obama's visit earlier in the week, but many said the concert had implications beyond simple entertainment.

"The Rolling Stones being in Cuba at this time is like several steps up the ladder," said Jennifer Corchado, a 23-year-old biologist. "It's like three steps up the staircase toward global culture, toward the rest of the world."

Among the spectators was a large contingent of foreign tourists, for whom seeing Cuba was as novel as seeing the Rolling Stones is for Cubans.

Ken Smith, a 59-year-old retired sailor, and Paul Herold, a 65-year-old retired plumber, sailed to Havana from Key West, Florida on Herold's yacht.

"This has been one of my life-long dreams, to come to Cuba on my sailboat," Herold said.

Some Cuban concert-goers said it made them more optimistic about the future of their country.

"This is history," said Raul Podio, a 22-year-old employee of a state security firm, who was joined by a group of young friends. "I would like to see more groups, for there to be more variety, for more artists to come, because that would mean we are less isolated."

The band's Cuba stop ended its "Ole" Latin America tour, which also included concerts in Brazil, Uruguay, Chile, Argentina and Mexico.

Sanders seeks caucus trifecta win to close delegate gap

LISA LERER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Bernie Sanders pushed for a trifecta of wins in Saturday's Democratic presidential caucuses in Hawaii, Alaska and Washington state, hoping to stoke a spring comeback against the commanding front-runner, Hillary Clinton.

The Vermont senator spent much of the week on the West Coast, trying to build his enduring support among liberal activists into a Saturday sweep that could help him narrow a gap of 300 delegates won in primaries behind Clinton. That's about double the margin that then-Illinois Sen. Barack Obama held over Clinton in the 2008 primaries.

While Sanders faces a steep climb to the nomination, a string of losses for Clinton would highlight persistent vulnerabilities within her own party. Sanders continues to attract tens of thousands to his rallies — drawing more than 17,000 in Seattle this week — and has collected more than \$140 million from 2 million donors.

But turning that passionate support into the party nomination is growing increasingly difficult. Clinton has a delegate lead of 1,223 to 920 over Sanders, according to an Associated Press analysis, an advantage that expands to 1,691-949 once the superdelegates, or party officials who can back either candidate, are included.

Based on that count, Sanders still needs to win 58 percent of the remaining delegates from primaries and caucuses to have a majority of those delegates by June's end.

His bar is even higher when the party officials are considered. He needs to win more than 67 percent of the remaining delegates overall — from primaries, caucuses and the ranks of uncommitted superdelegates — to prevail.

"I have gotten 2.6 million more votes than Bernie Sanders," Clinton told supporters crowded into a union hall in Everett, Washington, this week. "We are on the path to the nomination, and I want Washington to be part of how we get there."

Sanders implored thousands of supporters in Spokane to come see him speak again Saturday — at a caucus. "Get there early," he said. "Let's have a record-breaking turnout."

On Tuesday, Sanders won caucuses in Utah and Idaho but lost Arizona — the largest delegate prize — to Clinton. Because Democrats allocate their delegates on a proportional basis, meaning that the popular vote loser can still pick up a share, those victories netted Sanders a gain of about 20 delegates.

He hopes to avoid a repeat of that performance by pulling out a win in Washington, which awards more

than double the number of delegates than Hawaii and Alaska combined. He's also looking to contests that follow in Wisconsin on April 5 and Wyoming on April 9 as a way to build momentum.

Most of his dozen primary-season wins have been in states with largely white populations and in caucus contests, which tend to attract the most active liberal Democrats. He's heavily favored by younger voters, who were a key part of the coalition that boosted Obama to victory twice.

Sanders dispatched his wife, Jane, to Alaska and Hawaii. Clinton, who held a conference call with supporters in Hawaii, did not send any high-profile supporters to campaign on her behalf.

Both candidates held several events in Washington state earlier this week.

Clinton has been looking past the primary contests and aiming at potential Republican challengers. In interviews, rallies and speeches this week, she largely focused on Tuesday's deadly attacks in Brussels, casting GOP front-runner Donald Trump and Texas Sen. Ted Cruz as unqualified to deal with complicated international threats.

Her campaign sees the April 19 contest in New York as an important one, not just because of the rich delegate prize but because losing to Sanders in a state she represented in the Senate would be a psychological blow. She hopes to lock up an even larger share of delegates in five Northeastern contests a week later.

Chinese writer linked to president resignation letter freed

DIDI TANG, Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — A Chinese writer linked to the investigation of an online petition calling for the Chinese president's resignation has been released, his lawyer confirmed on Saturday.

Jia Jia, who was taken away by police on March 15 from a Beijing airport, on Friday night informed friends in a private social media group of his safety. His lawyer Yan Xin confirmed that Jia was free, had met his wife and — although he was staying in a hotel — could return home any time.

"Thank you, everyone," Jia posted in the social media. "I dare not forget your concerns."

Jia, who has declined media interviews, apparently is part of a high-profile investigation into an anonymous letter that criticized President Xi Jinping's rule and called for him to step down. It briefly appeared on the government-controlled news site Watching.cn in early March.

"We don't think Comrade Xi Jinping has the ability to lead the party and the country into the future. We don't think he's suitable to be the general secretary of the party," said the letter, which was signed by "Loyal Communist Party Members" and dated March 2016.

It went to demand Xi's resignation, criticizing him for consolidating too much power and making wrong decisions that led to China's stock turmoil.

The president of Watching.cn, Li Wanhui, two top editors — including Editor-in-Chief Ouyang Hongliang — and two site technicians have been reported to be out of contact for days and believed to be under investigation.

Nine other technicians working for a technology firm that provides support to the site also are reported missing.

China's State Internet Information Office referred inquiries about the letter and Watching.cn to the ruling Communist Party's propaganda committee for the western region of Xinjiang, which directly supervises the news site, but the propaganda office there claimed no knowledge of the matter.

Li, the president of Watching.cn, also is the chief editor of ts.cn, the news site run by Xinjiang's propaganda office.

Chinese overseas media, quoting inside sources, say the news site is falling apart, but its newsroom in a downtown Beijing office building appeared to be operating normally this week. Its journalists declined to speak to The Associated Press about their editors and the future of the site, which was launched last year to promote Xi's economic plan of "One Belt, One Road." The plan is aimed at increasing China's overseas investment and trade.

Wen Yunchao, a prominent overseas Chinese activist, said he had come under pressure from Chinese

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authorities to admit his connection to the letter. The New York-based critic said that authorities in his southern Chinese home county of Jiexi have been holding his elderly parents and a younger brother since Tuesday in an apparent act of coercion.

"But I cannot admit things that have nothing to do with me," Wen wrote on his Twitter account.

Calls to the local police were unanswered on Saturday.

On Friday, Amnesty International called on Chinese authorities to stop harassing dissents' family members, saying such unlawful tactics made a mockery of China's claims to respect the rule of law.

Jia's friends believe the writer might have unwittingly implicated himself when he warned Ouyang, a close friend, about the publication of the letter.

Yan said he hoped that Jia's release is proof that his client had nothing to do with the letter.

For several days following Jia's disappearance, there was no word at all about the writer, adding to public anxiety about his whereabouts and raising questions over China's rule of law when authorities failed to account for Jia's situation in a timely manner.

It was only five days later when Yan learned from airport police that Jia was taken away.

Today in History The Associated Press

Today is Saturday, March 26, the 86th day of 2016. There are 280 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On March 26, 1979, a peace treaty was signed by Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin (men-AH'-kem BAY'-gihn) and Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and witnessed by President Jimmy Carter at the White House.

On this date:

In 1812, an earthquake devastated Caracas, Venezuela, causing an estimated 26,000 deaths, according to the U.S. Geological Survey.

In 1827, composer Ludwig van Beethoven died in Vienna.

In 1874, poet Robert Frost was born in San Francisco.

In 1892, poet Walt Whitman died in Camden, New Jersey.

In 1917, the Seattle Metropolitans became the first U.S. team to win the Stanley Cup as they defeated the Montreal Canadiens.

In 1945, during World War II, Iwo Jima was fully secured by U.S. forces following a final, desperate attack by Japanese soldiers. Former British Prime Minister David Lloyd George, 82, died in Ty Newydd, Llanystumdwy, Wales.

In 1958, the U.S. Army launched America's third successful satellite, Explorer 3.

In 1964, the musical play "Funny Girl," starring Barbra Streisand as Fanny Brice, opened on Broadway.

In 1971, East Pakistan proclaimed its independence, taking the name Bangladesh.

In 1982, groundbreaking ceremonies took place in Washington, D.C., for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

In 1996, former U.S. senator and secretary of state Edmund Muskie died in Washington, D.C., two days shy of his 82nd birthday.

In 1997, the bodies of 39 members of the Heaven's Gate techno-religious cult who'd committed suicide were found inside a rented mansion in Rancho Santa Fe, California.

Ten years ago: An Afghan court dismissed the case against a man facing possible execution for converting from Islam to Christianity. (Abdul Rahman was released and granted asylum by Italy.) Paul Dana, 30, died when he slammed into a stopped car during a warmup session of the Toyota Indy 300 at the Homestead-Miami Speedway.

Five years ago: More than 250,000 people took to London's streets to protest the toughest spending cuts since World War II; riot police clashed with small breakaway groups and arrested more than 200 people. Former Democratic vice presidential candidate Geraldine Ferraro, the first female major party nominee for the office, died in Boston at 75. Harry Wesley Coover Jr., 94, known as the inventor of the popular

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adhesive Super Glue, died in Kingsport, Tennessee.

One year ago: Indiana Gov. Mike Pence signed a measure prohibiting state and local laws that “substantially burden” the ability of people to follow their religious beliefs; opponents charged the new law could legalize discrimination against gay people. In New York City, a gas explosion and fire destroyed three buildings in Manhattan’s East Village, killing a restaurant worker and a diner (five people are accused of rigging an illegal gas delivery system blamed for the blast).

Today’s Birthdays: Retired Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O’Connor is 86. Actor Alan Arkin is 82. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas is 81. House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi (puh-LOH’-see) is 76. Actor James Caan is 76. Author Erica Jong is 74. Journalist Bob Woodward is 73. Singer Diana Ross is 72. Actor Johnny Crawford is 70. Rock singer Steven Tyler (Aerosmith) is 68. Singer and TV personality Vicki Lawrence is 67. Actor Ernest Thomas is 67. Comedian Martin Short is 66. Country singer Ronnie McDowell is 66. Movie composer Alan Silvestri is 66. Rock musician Monte Yoho is 64. Radio talk show host Curt Sliwa is 62. Country singer Dean Dillon is 61. Country singer Charly McClain is 60. TV personality Leeza Gibbons is 59. Actress Ellia English is 57. Actress Jennifer Grey is 56. College and Pro Football Hall of Famer Marcus Allen is 56. Actor Billy Warlock is 55. Actor Eric Allan Kramer is 54. Basketball Hall of Famer John Stockton is 54. Actor Michael Imperioli is 50. Rock musician James Iha (EE’-hah) is 48. Country singer Kenny Chesney is 48. Actress Leslie Mann is 44. Actor T.R. Knight is 43. Rapper Juvenile is 41. Actress Amy Smart is 40. Actress Bianca Kajlich (KY’-lihk) is 39. Actress Keira Knightley is 31. Rapper J-Kwon is 30. Actress Carly Chaikin is 26.

Thought for Today: “Life’s like a play; it’s not the length but the excellence of the acting that matters.” — Seneca the Younger, Roman statesman and philosopher (3 B.C.-A.D. 65).

Pope on Good Friday decries terror profaning God’s name

FRANCES D’EMILIO, Associated Press

ROME (AP) — Pope Francis at the traditional Good Friday cross procession denounced those committing “terrorist acts” while profaning God’s name and lamented what he called “anesthetized” consciences over war refugees flooding Europe.

Francis renewed his condemnation of what he has called indifference and inhospitality to those risking their lives in unseaworthy smugglers’ boats in hopes of finding refuge on European shores from war and other violence.

Evoking the image of Jesus on the cross, Francis said: “we see you in the faces of children, of women and people, worn out and fearful, who flee war and violence and who often only find death” and people who refuse to deal with them.

Francis called the Mediterranean and Aegean Seas, two major routes for refugees and migrants, “insatiable cemeteries, reflections of our indifferent and anesthetized conscience.”

In reference to deadly extremist attacks in Europe, Iraq and elsewhere, Francis denounced “expressions of fundamentalism” and “terrorist acts committed by followers of some religions which profane the name of God and which use the holy name to justify their unprecedented violence.”

Earlier in the week, Francis called the deadly attacks at a Brussels metro station and airport “cruel abominations.”

Wearing a long white coat against the evening’s chill, Francis had presided over a torch-lit procession at the ancient Roman arena, a symbol of early Christian martyrdom.

Again, suggesting the image of Jesus’ dying on the cross, Francis said: “We see you raised up in our sisters and brothers killed, burned alive, throats slit and decapitated by barbarous blades amid cowardly silence.” Throughout his papacy, Francis has repeatedly lamented the persecution and killing of Christians for their faith by extremists in the Middle East.

In his prayer ending the Colosseum service, he said the “certainty” of God’s love won’t be obscured by “the apparent victory of evil.”

The Good Friday service drew thousands of pilgrims and Romans who patiently submitted to security

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checks, part of stepped-up measures across much of Europe after the Brussels attacks.

Hours before the pope arrived, police led explosives-detecting dogs through inspections inside and outside the Colosseum. Later, police waved metal-detecting wands across the faithful and searched their bags and knapsacks.

Another security challenge comes on Sunday, when tens of thousands of people are expected in St. Peter's Square for Easter Mass celebrated by the pope.