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State One-Act Play

The State One-Act Play was held in Aberdeen over the weekend. Groton's actors received a superior ensemble award. They are Thane Henschel, Mitchell Koens, Tylan Glover, Erin Smith, AnneMarie Smith, and Maddy Schuelke.

Apts for Rent

1 bedroom and HUGE 2 bedroom, 2 bath apartments available NOW! All utilities included except A/C, 1 bedroom \$504 and HUGE 2 bedroom 2 bath \$674 Please call or text 239-849-7674

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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Monday, Feb. 6

Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study at 6:30 a.m.

JHBBB: Hosts Clark-Willow Lake. 7th grade at 6 p.m., 8th grade at 7 p.m.

City Council: Meeting at 7 p.m. at Groton Community Center

School Breakfast: Breakfast pizza, fruit, juice, milk.

School Menu: Chicken Sandwich, sweet potato tots, fruit, carrots and dip.

Senior Menu: Tater tot hot dish, green beans, orange half, sugar cookie, whole wheat bread.

Tuesday, Feb. 7

NSU Symphonic Band at GHS Gym from 8:30 a.m. to 9:20 p.m.

GBB at Roncalli: C game at 5:15 p.m. with JV and varsity games to follow.

School Breakfast: French toast sticks, sausage links, fruit, juice, milk.

School Lunch: Chili, cornbread, fruit, broccoli and dip.

Senior Menu: Baked chicken, mashed potatoes and gravy, California blend vegetables, lemon tart bar, whole wheat bread.

Wednesday, Feb. 8

St. John's Lutheran: Confirmation, 3:45 p.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: League at 6:30 p.m., Confirmation at 7 p.m.

MathCounts: NESD Chapter at NSU

Small Group Music Contest: at Aberdeen

School Breakfast: Egg sausage biscuit, fruit, juice, milk.

School Lunch: Lasagna hot dish, corn, fruit,

JOHNSON AGENCY

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Groton, SD 57445

Home: 605/397-8565





Glimpse From Greenfield

Brock Greenfield
State Senator
District 2

The fourth week of Session was the busiest and most emotional one to-date on the Senate side. One bill that did not draw any controversy but did accomplish much was SB 65, which seeks to put in-place the South Dakota Board of Technical Education and establishes how the membership will be selected. The bill is 23 pages and is the product of work that has been done since

Constitutional Amendment R was passed in November. Amendment R established the framework for the governing board for vocational technical institutes in SD. SB 65 establishes the statutory language that compliments the tenets of "R". The vo-techs worked extraordinarily hard to get "R" passed, and they have done a wonderful job of working together to bring all interested parties to the table to craft this language. In the end, SB 65 passed the Senate, 33-0.

SB 72 sought to revise our child custody law to call for a presumption of joint physical custody unless aggravating factors suggest that one parent should not be awarded joint custody. In the instance that one parent is abusive or a chemical dependent, the courts would not be compelled to award joint physical custody. However, if such conditions are not present, the courts would have been directed to allow both parents to have equal time with their child(ren). A bill that was sold as having a similar goal was passed three years ago, but it merely said that the courts should "consider" awarding joint physical custody--again, assuming there were no concerns about one parent's fitness to parent his or her child(ren). The argument was made that in the unfortunate instance of divorce, that doesn't mean that one parent is automatically unable to care for his or her kids. Both parents still love their kids, even if they cannot continue on as a married couple. It was a terribly difficult bill with a lot of emotion involved. Most of the emotion stemmed from the fact that the proponents had felt this policy is what they were going to get with the passage of the 2014 bill, but did not. They fell short this year when the bill failed on the Senate floor by a vote of 14-21. Incidentally, in 2014, the bill I mentioned passed unanimously on the Senate side and 68-2 on the House side. I trust this will not be the last time this type of issue is taken up. Many unanswered questions and much raw emotion remain. Ultimately, we want to ensure that the best interests of the children is achieved. Based upon the testimony we heard this year, I cannot tell you with any confidence that is currently the case.

SB 91 was another hotly debated bill. Back in 2011, a ruling of a judge changed how our rape laws are interpreted. This bill seeks to change things back to the way they were prior to that court ruling. The language of the bill inserts that it is not a defense in a rape case that the perpetrator did not know the victim's age or that the victim was incapable of giving consent. This bill had support from one state's attorney who testified on his own behalf, the SD Network Against Family Violence & Sexual Assault, the SD States Attorneys Association, and the Office of the Attorney General. It was opposed by the SD Assn of Criminal Defense Attorneys. The proponents discussed many reasons for clarifying our law to reflect the interpretation prior to 2011. Much of the testimony talked about instances in which somebody was incapable of giving consent because of being under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Other concerns are that a person who is disabled may be incapable of giving

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Harry Implement Inc.

PO Box 841
Ferney, SD
57439



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consent, and a person who is under 16 may be exploited by somebody who is over 19, and in those cases, the perp cannot simply claim ignorance as to the victim's age in a case of statutory rape. I supported the bill that makes it more difficult to claim ignorance as a defense of sexual crime charges. The bill passed the Judiciary Committee, 6-1, before prevailing on the floor, 22-13.

I have mentioned HB 1069 which repealed IM 22 in two of my previous articles. IM 22 purported to make positive changes to our campaign finance laws. It was brought to us by a political operative in Massachusetts who knew the measure had constitutional problems a year-and-a-half before the vote. They had an opportunity to change the measure, but did not. First, it sought to appropriate money, which our SD Constitution prohibits. The money that was to be appropriated was to create an account to fund politicians' campaigns with taxpayer dollars. It would have taken \$12 million from schools, nursing homes and adjustment training centers. Moreover, it would have left a hole of \$42 million if we were to fully fund the program created by IM 22. IM 22 also increased the campaign contribution amounts that had to be reported from \$100 to \$200, thus resulting in LESS transparency in who was involving themselves in the political process in SD. The false campaign claimed it would increase transparency. The out-of-state ad campaign also claimed it was putting a law on the books to prohibit bribes and to make accepting bribes a Class 1 misdemeanor. Actually, we have had a law on our books for decades that establishes bribes are illegal and violations are Class 4 felonies. Thus, the Massachusetts law grossly decreased the penalty for accepting bribes. The measure defined "gifts" as such things as employment or compensation or anything of value and defined lobbyists as those who essentially lobby directly or indirectly by virtue of hired lobbyists. This meant that if I substitute taught more than one day, I would have to 1) volunteer my time, 2) quit my job as a legislator, or 3) face a Class 1 misdemeanor every time I subbed after the first day, as I would then be accepting a "gift" from my employer who engages in indirect lobbying during the session. The measure created a conflict for virtually every person in SD who is in the legislature. Those with children in school are undeniably receiving something of value from the schools. Thus, they would be breaking the law. After IM 22 passed, it took effect eight days later, thus replacing much of our campaign finance law. When it was enjoined (rendered unenforceable) by the court a couple weeks later, it left a lot of questions hanging in the balance. Because the law changed contribution limits, there was some confusion as to whether we defaulted to the old contribution limits which had been stricken down by the new law, or whether since the new law had taken effect for a short time, if we even had any contribution limits in effect at all. Truly, this measure created a Constitutional crisis on many levels. Those who wanted us to continue litigating IM 22 said that it could take years for a final resolution by the courts. I suggested that the good people of South Dakota who passed the law demand action sooner than that. By passing HB 1069, we are able to enact campaign finance reform immediately this year. Failure to do so would have meant many more steps in the legal process at the expense of the taxpayers. For the record, I want to state that I have never known anybody to offer or accept a bribe of any kind in my 17 years of service. Also, for the record, nothing in IM 22 had any bearing on such government programs as EB-5 or GEAR-UP. It sought only to address elections/campaign finance, not federal or state programs. Interestingly, the EB-5 and GEAR-UP scandals were snuffed out through the work of the Auditor General who serves the Legislative branch, in concert with the Government Operations and Audit Committee, which is wholly comprised of legislators. Other independent investigations yielded no charges; it was GOAC and the Auditor General who came up with the findings that have led to charges. In my humble opinion, the recently-announced punishment did not fit the crime in the EB-5 scandal, but I digress. HB 1069 passed the Senate, 27-8, and has already been signed into law and taken effect. We can now move on to enacting laws that are constitutional and are in accordance with the will expressed by the voters. Legislators on both sides of the aisle are committed to working together to ensure this happens. Stay tuned for further updates on these matters. I have every confidence that you will approve of the resulting bills/laws. Nobody takes lightly any element of this issue.

Finally, I have received a lot of input from you on a whole host of issues. I do appreciate your thoughts and your willingness to be involved in your government. I remain very thankful for the trust you have placed in me, as well as the opportunity to work for you.

God bless!

Weekly Vikings Roundup

By Jordan Wright

The New England Patriots pulled off one of the most impressive comebacks in sports history on Sunday, coming back from a 25-point deficit to defeat the Atlanta Falcons, who were led by NFL MVP Matt Ryan. The previous record for largest deficit overcome was set by New England just a couple years ago, when they came back from 10 down against the Seattle Seahawks. Tom Brady decided to out-do himself this year, and he now has more Super Bowl victories than any quarterback in NFL history.

In the first half of the game, it looked like this game was going to be a blowout. The Falcons jumped out to a 21-point lead, and led 21-3 at halftime. Matt Ryan and the Atlanta offense looked unstoppable, while Atlanta's young defense was showing off their speed and athleticism, pressuring Tom Brady and frustrating New England's offense.

The second half started out well for Atlanta, as they were able to tack on another touchdown and expand their lead to 28-3. The Patriots looked doomed, Atlanta looked like they would win their first championship, and I was settling in for a boring second half that would hopefully provide some great commercials at the very least. However, like many people who were watching the game, I learned one thing on Sunday: never count out Bill Belichick.

Belichick put the ball in Tom Brady's hands, asking his aging quarterback to attempt 62 passes (a Super Bowl record). Brady answered his coach's plea, and threw for 466 yards (another Super Bowl record) to go along with two touchdowns. Brady even surprised many when he scrambled for 15 yards and a first down, proving that he may be old and slow, but he isn't immobile. The Patriots' comeback wouldn't have happened if it wasn't for a spectacular catch by Julian Edelman, however. Edelman's catch will go down as one of the greatest catches in NFL history, as he was somehow able to scoop up the ball as it was centimeters from the ground after first being tipped by a defensive player.

Not only did we get to witness the first Super Bowl to go to overtime, but we also saw one of the greatest championship-game performances by both Brady and Belichick. Lots of people may dislike the New England Patriots, but it's hard to argue that there is a better coach or quarterback in the history of the NFL.

Besides the actual football game, people from all over the world had their eyes glued to the television screen, hoping to see a great halftime performance and some even better commercials. I must say I wasn't a big fan of Lady Gaga and her performance during intermission, but I was even more disappointed in the quality (or lack thereof) of the commercials. My favorite commercial was from Skittles, when a young man was throwing the candies at a window of a lady he is trying to court, while inside the young lady's entire family (and some other individuals) were sitting there eating the candy as it was being thrown. Besides that ad, I didn't really laugh at anything, but I do think the "live" Snickers commercial was a pretty neat idea.

Looking ahead, the entire NFL will now shift its focus to the offseason. The Minnesota Vikings have plenty of items on their to-do list, including the future of Adrian Peterson and figuring out a way to build a better offensive line. There are also plenty of questions surrounding the quarterback situation, specifically the health of Teddy Bridgewater.

Next week, I will begin to break down the Vikings' roster. I will be taking a look at every position group, and let you know who will be staying, who will be going, and what positions require the most help. In the meantime, let me know what your favorite commercials were from the Super Bowl, and if you have any Vikings related questions, feel free to send them my way! [Facebook.com/SkolJWright](https://www.facebook.com/SkolJWright)

Thanks for reading along this season! It has been my sincere pleasure to provide you with game recaps and my own personal thoughts on the team I love.

See you next week! Skol



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Lana's Annals

**Lana
Greenfield
District 2
State
Representative**

Greetings to you all! We are starting to get more bills in, and the activity is picking up in the capitol city.

On the House floor, we debated HB1003, which would have allowed nursing facilities to transfer or sell extra nursing home beds to places where needed. The bill was defeated 53-16. I voted against it as I do not like the idea of nursing homes bidding for beds. Obviously, they would go to those that can most afford it, and they may be then selective upon whom they choose as patients. The nursing homes who sold the beds would have operating money from the sale, but it would only be a temporary expense fix. I think we must find another way to allow beds in areas that are short. I do not know whether renting the beds out would be a better fix or not. It may be only an idea for future discussion.

SB4 with a three year sunset clause requires a Board of Pharmacy to report to the Legislature regarding monitoring and use of opioids in the state. Records can be tracked as to when a customer purchased an opioid from a pharmacy. In doing so, the number and kinds of pills can be flagged if re-ordered in a very short period of time. This would be an indicator that someone either is abusing the use of a certain pill or is possibly selling them. It is sad that we have come to this point and to have burdensome regulatory methods to try to prevent this type of drug abuse.

By the time you read this, I will have presented HB1071 on the floor. It calls for the legislature to be a part of the discussion and decision making IF any company should try to deposit nuclear waste in our state. The current law reads that the Governor has the say and MAY consult the legislature. I think this needs changing. I HOPE that we never have to discuss this subject, but some counties do not have zoning laws and are easy targets for dumping; therefore, we can be a voice to help them should the need arise.

I have been hearing from many of you regarding an upcoming bill. HB1094 would allow for the transfer of certain landowner hunting licenses. For example, if a landowner obtained a deer tag and did not want to use it, he may transfer it to someone else. This will be a bill to debate as people I have heard from do not want to see it this to become a type of commercialization. Others say it is a free country and once gotten, the landowner should be able to do anything with his tag.

We attended a Cracker Barrel in Aberdeen this past Saturday. NSU President Downs was present and explained that the college will be asking for legislative approval to construct a 25 million dollar regional science education center. He explained that this would be used as a learning center for our area schools as well as for college students. The BEST thing about it is that no state funds will be involved. I asked about future upkeep and maintenance and was told that money is also available to cover that aspect. I am excited about the project and see no reason why we should reject taking the practice football field land and use it for this construction. It is not often that a request such as this has already been covered through private funding.

Upcoming area Cracker Barrel dates are as follows: Lake Norden Community Center, Feb 18 at 10:30; Clark Community Center, Feb. 20 at 10:30; Redfield Depot, Feb.20 at 2 P.M. We also have three more at Aberdeen NSU campus, Feb. 11, 25, and March 4 starting at 10 A.M.

Until next week, stay well and safe! The ice under foot is a real danger!

I can be contacted at Lana.Greenfield@sdlegislature.gov or lane.greenfield@gmail.com. My home phone is 635-6932 on weekends.

With regards,
Rep. Lana Greenfield



By **Richard P. Holm M.D.**

Stress on the Prairie

During the summer after my freshman year in high school, my dad found a job for me working on a farm, hoping it would teach me work ethic. I remember hard physical work, long hours of hauling and stacking bales, and profound loneliness while painting farm buildings.

At the time, it was the most stressful experience of my young life; bringing me out of my lackadaisical youth and a tad closer to the world of a responsible adult. I have often referred to that time as the period in my life when I

realized the value of hard work. It was a tough summer brought upon me by my dad and a kindly farmer, and I became the better for it. Of course, this was nothing compared to what some farm-kids experience, but I learned that summer stress and hard work could be a good thing.

Similar types of stress can be from many causes: tension, trauma, aging, money pressure, worry, fear, and anxiety from big or only perceived problems. It is a pull or push force exerted on the body resulting in strain, with or without movement. One famous expert, Hans Selye, defined stress in two ways: there is distress, which is bad stress; and eustress, which is good stress. He found that bad stress results from being forced to face trouble without tools to cope or solve the problem. It is like being broke-down in the field, and you can't get the part to fix it.

A famous Harvard Study starting in 1938, which followed one class of sophomore men for the duration of their lives, discovered cholesterol, IQ, and childhood temperament had nothing to do with healthy aging; while smoking, alcohol abuse, and depression all had major negative effects. Healthy aging was best accomplished and measured not by money, but by how these men coped with tough times while finding ways to connect with others.

Good stress is facing adversity and finding ways to either solve problems or accept them as unresolvable. Like exercise, it involves movement and is something we can learn to accept and even enjoy. As Selye put it, good stress makes you stronger, and the opposite is also true: without stress, our muscles, bones, and hearts become weak. Indeed, the trials of life can become good stress if we can learn to deal with adversity. Stress can give us strength, direction, and even purpose.

Whether it is learning to work hard on a farm, dealing with broken down machinery, facing the inconsistencies of Mother Nature, experiencing long lonely hours in isolation, or tolerating cantankerous humans; stress is part of this life, and coping with it is a skill we can and need to develop.

 **livestream**
Upcoming Events

Monday, Feb. 7

City Council Meeting

7 p.m. at Groton Community Center

gdilive.com

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Today in Weather History

February 7, 1994: Snow falling over the area produced heavy accumulations from central into north-east South Dakota with 11 inches at Kennebec and eight inches at Watertown from the 7th through the 9th. Extreme cold accompanied and followed the snow with low temperatures of 52 below zero at Promise and 45 below zero at Aberdeen on the 9th. Snow accumulation caused a roof to cave in on a drugstore at Bristol. A man died of exposure attempting to walk home near Sioux Falls after his car became stuck in a ditch.

February 7, 2001: Heavy snow of 6 to 16 inches fell across central and northeast South Dakota resulting in school and activities cancellations, closing of some businesses, and difficult if not impossible travel. Several people became stranded and had to be rescued. There were also flight cancellations and delays along with some vehicle accidents resulting in minor injuries. Some snowfall amounts included, 6 inches at Mound City, Mobridge, Eureka, 7 inches at Milbank and 6 SE McIntosh, 8 inches at Aberdeen, Ipswich, Selby, Iona, and Britton, 9 inches at Clark, 1 S Columbia, Isabel, Webster, and 10 inches at Roscoe, Watertown, and 1 W of Summit. Locations with snowfall of a foot included, Mission Ridge, Murdo, 4 NW Onida, Castlewood, 23 N Highmore, and Timber Lake. Thirteen inches of snow fell at Canning, and Fort Pierre, 14 inches fell at Gettysburg, Eagle Butte, and Pierre with 15 inches at Miller and 16 inches of snow at Clear Lake, Mellette, and Faulkton.

February 7, 2010: A compact but strong area of low pressure moved from Canada and across the Northern Plains from the 7th through the 9th. A prolonged period of moderate to heavy snow developed over far northeast South Dakota and west central Minnesota bringing 6 to 8 inches of snow to the area. Some snowfall amounts included, 6 inches at Milbank, Wheaton, and Ortonville; 7 inches at Clear Lake, Sisseton, and Artichoke Lake; 8 inches at Summit, Victor, Wilmot, and Browns Valley.

1812: The Hard Shock of the New Madrid Earthquake series strikes the area around the small town of New Madrid Missouri. A three-mile long island, Island #32 was completely sunk! The Mississippi River once again ran backwards. This major shock marked the beginning of the end of New Madrid's long ordeal, even though aftershocks would continue to be felt for years and the fault is still active.








1835: A Great Freeze took place from February 2-9 across southern Georgia, southeast South Carolina, and northern Florida. During this freeze, the St. Johns River was frozen, "several rods from the shore," and people were able to walk a distance from the shore. Many citrus and other fruit trees were killed to the ground, never to grow again, when temperatures reached as low as 1°F in Charleston and 8°F in Jacksonville. A Florida gentleman told a newspaper that the state, "appeared as desolate as if a fire had swept over it," after the severe freeze of that winter season. According to Florida Citrus Mutual, this freeze was so severe that it is considered an impact freeze. This indicates that the freeze, annihilate entire groves across the state, killing both mature and young citrus trees, while causing a profound economic impact on the citrus industry and prompting growers to replant farther south. This freeze ended attempts to grow citrus in southern Georgia, southeast South Carolina, and northern Florida.

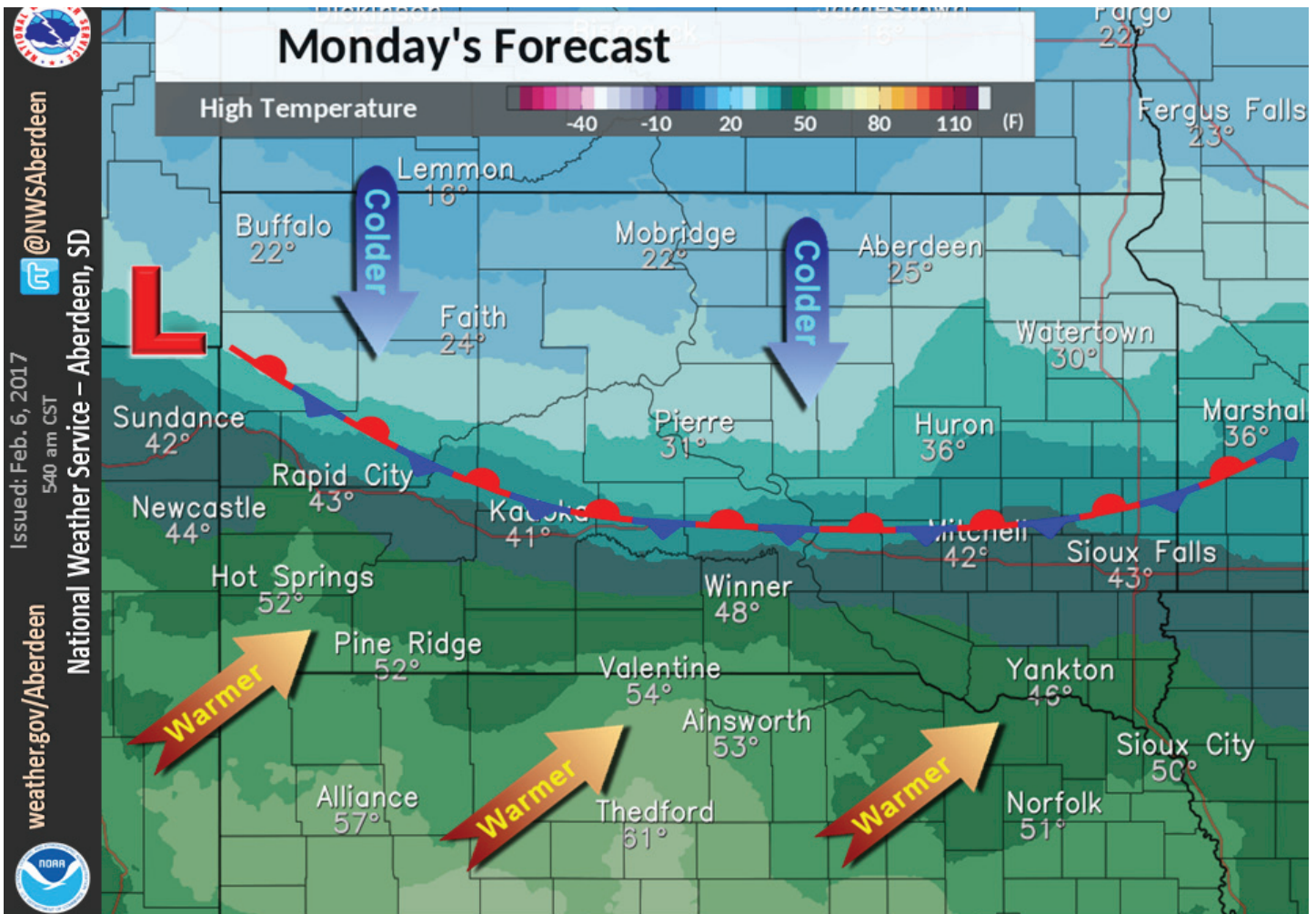
1882: The temperature falls to 90 degrees below zero in Verkhoiansk, Russia on this day. This was considered the coldest temperature ever recorded in Asia. However this reading was done by a spirit thermometer, which is less accurate than a mercury thermometer. The accepted record is 90 degree below zero in Oymyakon on February 6, 1933.

1933: The USS Ramapo, a 478 ft. Navy oiler found was traveling from Manila to San Diego when it encountered the tallest rogue wave ever recorded. The wave measured 112 feet in height was caused by 70 mph winds over a large fetch of ocean.

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Today	Tonight	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday
						
Mostly Cloudy	Chance Freezing Drizzle then Chance Wintry Mix	Chance Snow and Patchy Blowing Snow	Partly Cloudy	Cold	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny
High: 25 °F	Low: 12 °F	High: 14 °F↓	Low: -5 °F	High: 9 °F	Low: -5 °F	High: 23 °F



A clash of air masses will set up today across the region as a frontal boundary will be splayed out from west to east across the state. North of the front will be chilly with northeast breezes and highs in the teens and 20s. South of the front, temperatures will be rather mild today with highs in the 40s over southern South Dakota. Later today though, this front will begin moving southward, dragging cold air and clouds further south through the region. This evening and overnight, there is some potential for light snow and light freezing drizzle. Any accumulations will remain light, with snowfall amounts forecast to be less than an inch. Any freezing drizzle accumulations will be very light.

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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 22

Low Outside Temp: 8.3

High Gust: 15

Rain: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 58° in 1987

Record Low: -33 in 1907

Average High: 25°F

Average Low: 4°F

Average Precip in Feb.: 0.09

Precip to date in Jan.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 0.56

Precip Year to Date: 0.00

Sunset Tonight: 5:48 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:46 a.m.



Weather Forecast for Mon, Feb 06, 2017, issued 4:45 AM EST
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by McReynolds based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts

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TAKE TIME TO PREACH

Saint Francis is remembered for his greatness and goodness in spreading the Gospel of Christ. His writings still inspire people today.

One day he said to a fellow brother who lived with him in the monastery, "Let's go to town and preach to the people."

As they walked the dusty road they stopped to talk to people and play games with the children. Tired and hungry, St. Francis turned to his young companion and said, "Let's return to the monastery."

"But," protested his young colleague, "when do we preach to the people?"

"Every step we took," said St. Francis, "and every word we spoke and every smile we shared with the people and everything we did was our sermon. We have been preaching all day!"

The only sermon some people will ever hear are the words that come from our lips and the only preaching that many will "listen" to is what they see in our lives. For many we are what we say we believe.

John wrote, "Those who say they live in God should live as Christ did." To live as Jesus did we must obey His teachings and follow His example by being obedient to His teachings.

Years ago a hymn writer asked most effectively: "Can others see Jesus in you?"

Prayer: Father, may the disturbing words of that hymn trouble our minds and hearts and force us to examine our lives and make changes that will please You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: 1 John 2:6 He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.

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News from the Associated Press

The sweetest of them all: Patriots comeback tops them all

By EDDIE PELLIS, AP National Writer

HOUSTON (AP) — Tom Brady, Bill Belichick and the rest of the New England Patriots have long been reluctant to rank their victories. They've refused to label any given season, or title, sweeter than another. It's time to put that to rest.

This Super Bowl was lost.

New England trailed by 25 points and Brady had a case of happy feet and a wobbly arm that made him look every bit of his 39 years. Before Lady Gaga had even dropped from the sky for Sunday's halftime show, the pregame anointment of Brady as the greatest to ever play was being rightfully ripped on social media that, along with the scoreboard, had all but handed Atlanta this game.

Then came the best comeback ever.

No team had ever made up more than a 10-point deficit to win a Super Bowl. Brady led the Patriots on five straight scoring drives that equaled 31 straight points. The last touchdown wrapped up a 34-28 victory, yet felt inevitable and anticlimactic despite coming in the first-ever overtime in the Super Bowl's 51-year history.

"Tom has had a lot of great ones. Tonight was one of them," Belichick said, underselling the obvious.

Though New England still trailed by eight, this game felt more-or-less over when receiver Julian Edelman somehow wrapped up a pass that was first deflected by Atlanta cornerback Robert Alford, then bounced off Alford's knee and his thigh. Edelman trapped the ball against Alford's foot, then got both hands underneath the pigskin. The catch was upheld on review. It was good for 23 yards and a first down at the Atlanta 41 with 2:03 left.

It matched, or exceeded, what David Tyree of the Giants did nine years previously, when his football-on-the-helmet catch led to the end of New England's quest for an undefeated season in the Super Bowl.

"I knew I caught it," Edelman said.

The catch highlighted New England's 91-yard, game-tying drive and extinguished whatever fight was left in an Atlanta defense that looked unbeatable for 2 1/2 quarters — never more than when Alford intercepted Brady and took it 82 yards for a score that made it 21-0 late in the second quarter.

"Why didn't he Highstep that Thang," tweeted the former Falcon, Deion Sanders. Indeed, it felt like prime time for a celebration in Atlanta, a city with a long history of sports mediocrity and collapses, but nothing quite like this.

"No panic," Patriots wide receiver Matthew Slater explained. "We practiced in pads on Super Bowl week. We are squatting 80 percent of our maxes on Super Bowl week. We worked for this. Our bodies and minds were ready, and we just kept believing in one another."

And believing in Brady.

After the game, the NFL distributed a list of new Super Bowl records that took up nearly three-quarters of a page. There were 24 in all, the majority related in one way or another to the quarterback: Yards passing (446), pass attempts (62), completions (43), MVP awards (4), career wins (5, tied with Charles Haley, but now ahead of quarterbacks Terry Bradshaw and Joe Montana).

"He's laser-focused, and the entire time, there wasn't a time where we looked at Tom like he knew this thing was over," Patriots receiver Chris Hogan said. "There wasn't a doubt in my mind. We have one of the best quarterbacks that ever played the game."

Another record belonged to running back James White — New England's latest go-to guy on its long list of interchangeable parts. White's three touchdowns and one 2-point conversion equaled 20 points. That knocked Denver's Terrell Davis and about half of the 1980s and '90s San Francisco 49ers out of the record books.

Those Niners made a habit of putting on clinics in pinpoint perfection that made opposing defenses look invisible in a series of pick-your-score blowouts.

In capturing title No. 5, the Patriots were perfect by necessity.

"When you fall behind by a lot in a game like this, you have to make a lot of great plays and have a lot of things go right," offensive coordinator Josh McDaniels said.

Not everything went right for New England: Stephen Gostkowski clanked an extra point off the upright after New England's first touchdown made it 28-9. Then, after the Patriots had pulled within eight, Matt Ryan hit Julio Jones for a tip-toe catch that gave Atlanta the ball on the Patriots 22 with 4:40 left.

A field goal would have sealed it. Instead, the next four snaps resulted in a minus-23 yards, including Trey Flowers' sack and a holding call that forced a punt.

Brady got the ball at the 9 with 3:30 left. Ten plays later, including Edelman's catch, White plowed in from a yard, then Brady threw a bubble screen to Danny Amendola for New England's second straight 2-point conversion.

It was tied at 28, and the only drama left was whether the Patriots would win the coin toss to start overtime. They called heads and it was. Less than 15 minutes later, in real time, confetti was flying.

"That's for you guys to decide," was Belichick's pat answer when asked if this was the sweetest of them all.

His boss wasn't playing that game.

Robert Kraft stood on the podium, smiling away while commissioner Roger Goodell shouted into the microphone so he could be heard above the raucous boos raining down on him during the trophy presentation.

Goodell is Public Enemy No. 1 in New England because of "Deflategate" and the four-game suspension he handed Brady to start this season.

"A lot has transpired over the last two years, and I don't think that needs any explanation," Kraft said. "But I want to say to our fans, our brilliant coaching staff, our amazing players, who are so spectacular: This is unequivocally the sweetest."

For more NFL coverage: <http://www.pro32.ap.org> and http://www.twitter.com/AP_NFL

Brady earns 4th Super Bowl MVP trophy with epic comeback

By KRISTIE RIEKEN, AP Sports Writer

HOUSTON (AP) — The greatest quarterback in NFL history led the biggest Super Bowl comeback to be the MVP on Sunday night.

Tom Brady rallied New England from a 25-point third-quarter deficit for a 34-28 win over the Atlanta Falcons in the first overtime game in Super Bowl history to earn his fifth Super Bowl title and fourth MVP trophy.

"They're all sweet," he said. "They're all different and this was just an incredible team and I'm just happy to be a part of it," he said.

Brady threw touchdown passes of 5 and 6 yards in the second half and tied things at 28-28 when he connected with Danny Amendola on a 2-point conversion with 57 seconds left.

He then directed the drive in overtime which ended with a 2-yard run by James White to make the Patriots the first team to win a Super Bowl after trailing by more than 10 points.

"We all brought each other back," he said. "We never felt out of it. It was a tough battle."

His performance certainly wasn't without its struggles. His incredible second half and overtime came after a first half where the Patriots managed just three points and he threw an interception which Robert Alford returned 82 yards for a touchdown. He was hurried and harassed for much of the games. The Falcons sacked him five times and hit him on another eight occasions.

He noted the beating he took when he was trying to recount the details of the comeback and couldn't remember what the score was at one point in the rally.

"There was a lot of (stuff) that happened tonight," he said. "I got hit pretty hard."

His 466 yards passing are a Super Bowl record, surpassing the 414 yards Kurt Warner had 17 years ago. He also set a record for most passes completed in a Super Bowl with 43 and most attempts with 62.

He is the first to play in seven Super Bowls and the victory ties him with Charles Haley for most Super

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Bowl rings.

After all Brady has done in his career, was this his finest moment?

"Tom's had a lot of great ones," coach Bill Belichick said. "But, yeah tonight was one of them."

It's a triumphant end to a difficult season for Brady, who missed the first four games because of his "Deflategate" suspension and dealt with his mother Galynn Brady suffering through an undisclosed illness. The Super Bowl was the first game she's attended all season.

"They're all happy," he said fighting back tears. "It's nice to have everybody here and it's going to be a great celebration tonight."

He shared a quick moment with her right after the game, but was looking forward to more time with her in the upcoming days.

"It's kind of madness after the game so I didn't get much quality time with her but we'll get it this week," he said.

But he certainly wasn't asking for sympathy for his rough road to this title though, chuckling when someone asked about the adversity the Patriots have gone through in the past couple of years.

"We've done pretty good over the last few years ... so I don't think anyone's feeling bad for the Patriots," he said. "I don't think anyone feels bad for the Patriots."

Brady also collected the MVP trophy in 2001, 2003 and 2014.

"It was just a lot of mental toughness by our team and we're going to remember this one for the rest of our lives," Brady said.

For more NFL coverage: <http://www.pro32.ap.org> and http://www.twitter.com/AP_NFL

Taylor Swift's pre-Super Bowl show might be her only in 2017

By MESFIN FEKADU, AP Music Writer

Taylor Swift's pre-Super Bowl concert broke some news: She announced it may be her only concert of this year; she performed for the smallest number of fans in some time — 9,000 people is intimate for this pop star — and she sang her newest single live for the first time.

She also made some references to football during the 90-minute show, telling the crowd about her early country-turned-pop hit, "You Belong With Me," with lyrics about high school cheerleaders, bleachers and boys.

"I felt like it might be appropriate," she said.

Swift rocked the night at Houston's Club Nomadic — starting late Saturday and ending early Sunday morning — wearing a sheer, short Versace dress and fresh bangs.

The 27-year-old mostly performed songs from her Grammy-winning 2014 album "1989" and 2012's "Red," including pop smashes like "Shake It Off," "Blank Space," "Bad Blood," "Style," "We Are Never Getting Back Together," "22" and "I Knew You Were Trouble."

"It's good to be in Houston, Texas tonight," she yelled.

She worked the stage from the left to right, and strutted up the middle platform to sing closely to her feverish fans at the annual DIRECTV NOW Super Saturday Night — where past performers include Justin Timberlake and Rihanna.

"I swear you don't. You don't want it," Swift said after fans begged for the towel she used to wipe the sweat from her forehead.

Swift also debuted the live performance of "I Don't Want to Live Forever," her Top 5 duet with former One Direction member Zayn from the "Fifty Shades Darker" soundtrack.

The crowd — full of Swift's fans 18 and over — roared loudly, in hopes Zayn would appear. "He's definitely not (here)," she assured them.

But she asked the audience to sing along, as she stripped the song to acoustic form, strumming her guitar.

She also slowed things down when performing songs she wrote for others — saying it was one of her biggest accomplishments of the last year. She sang a soft version of "This Is What You Came For," the EDM hit she wrote with former boyfriend Calvin Harris (Rihanna's vocals are on the original). Swift also

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sang "Better Man," a recent No.1 country hit she wrote for Grammy-winning group Little Big Town.

Swift's last tour was a stadium trek with 60,000 seats. The singer, who won the album of the year Grammy last year for her first official pop album "1989," said the pre-Super Bowl show would likely be her only one this year.

"As far as I know I'm only doing one show in 2017, and as far as I know, this is that show," she said. "You are attending 100 percent of my tour dates."

Online:

<http://taylorswift.com/>

Super Bowl ads go political in a big way

By MAE ANDERSON, AP Technology Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Messages about America, inclusiveness — and, yes, even "four years of awful hair" — kept bubbling up in Super Bowl 51 ads from Airbnb, the NFL and a line of personal care products. But there was still plenty of escapism and light humor for those who weren't into the politics.

As the New England Patriots edged out the Atlanta Falcons on the field in Houston, Airbnb touted inclusiveness with an ad showing faces of different ethnicities and the copy: "We all belong. The world is more beautiful the more you accept."

Coca-Cola aired a previously run ad during the pregame show in which people sing "America the Beautiful" in different languages. And Budweiser ran a 60-second spot chronicling co-founder Adolphus Busch's migration from Germany to St. Louis in 1857, prompting some critics to start a boycott campaign on Twitter.

Even a hair care brand dipped into politics: The "It's a 10" hair brand indirectly referenced President Donald Trump's famously unruly do in its Super Bowl spot.

It's tough to be a Super Bowl advertiser, period. But this year, a divisive political climate has roiled the nation since Trump took office in January, making it even tougher for advertisers.

Advertisers who paid \$5 million for 30 seconds had to walk the line with ads that appealed to everyone and didn't offend. Some were more successful than others.

"Anxiety and politics just loom over this game, so anybody who gives us the blessed relief of entertaining with a real Super Bowl commercial wins," said Mark DiMassimo, CEO of the ad agency DiMassimo Goldstein.

Several ads aimed for just that. Tide, for instance, offered a humorous ad showing announcer Terry Bradshaw trying frantically to remedy a stain while his antics go "viral" online, with the help of New England Patriot Rob Gronkowski and actor Jeffrey Tambor.

WALKING THE POLITICAL LINE

"Brands used to worry about whether their ad could be interpreted as right or wrong," said Kelly O'Keefe, a marketing professor at Virginia Commonwealth University. "Now they have to worry about whether it will be interpreted as right or left."

Plenty of ads walked that line.

An NFL spot conveyed what all advertisers hope the Super Bowl becomes: a place where Americans can come together. "Inside these lines, we may have our differences, but recognize there's more that unites us," Forest Whitaker intoned in a voiceover as workers prepped a football field and gridiron scenes played.

"The Super Bowl is shaping up as a counterpoint to the divisiveness in the United States," said Tim Calkins, a marketing professor at Northwestern University.

Airbnb's ad was one of the more overtly political, showing a variety of different faces with the tagline "We accept."

Some thought the ad was a hit. "Kudos to them for making a strong statement," said O'Keefe. But others, such as Villanova University marketing professor Charles Taylor, thought it didn't have a clear enough link to the brand and risked coming off as a "purely political statement."

Budweiser drew some criticism for the immigration theme of its ad, including calls on Twitter to boycott the brewer. That fostered debate — and banter — online, particularly over one hashtag that misspelled the company's name, #boycottbudwiser.

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Other advertisers took the safest route possible by re-airing ads they've used before — an unusual, though not unprecedented, move. Coca-Cola, Google and Fiji water all aired rerun ads.

During the pre-game show, Coca-Cola ran "It's Beautiful," an ad featuring people around the country drinking the fizzy beverage and singing "America the Beautiful" in different languages.

SURPRISES

A debut Super Bowl spot by the "It's a 10" hair care brand introduced its line of men's products by joking about Donald Trump's hair.

"America, we're in for four years of awful hair, so it's up to you to do your part by making up for it with great hair," went a voiceover state as black-and-white photos of people with a wide array of hairstyles flashed by. "Do your part. ... Let's make sure these next four years are 'It's a 10.'"

Snickers got press by airing a live ad in the third quarter. On a Wild West set, actor Adam Driver seemed not to know the ad was live — and then the set fell apart (on purpose). "You ruin live Super Bowl commercials when you're hungry," the ad's tagline read.

"It went by so fast, I almost missed it," DiMassimo said. "Not sure it was worth the trouble of doing it live."

LIGHT HUMOR PLUS CELEBS

Ads with light humor and stuffed with celebrities were popular. Honda's ad made a splash by animating the yearbook photos of nine celebrities ranging from Tina Fey to Viola Davis. They make fun of their photos — Jimmy Kimmel is dressed in a blue tux and holding a clarinet, for example — and talk about "The Power of Dreams," Honda's ad slogan.

"It was a really good message and it was entertaining," said Mirta Desir, a New Orleans native who works in education and was watching the game on Long Island.

The Tide ad with Terry Bradshaw was a hit with some viewers because of the way it tricked viewers into thinking it was part of the broadcast. "It made you think twice," said Pablo Roachat, watching in Atlanta. "There was funny dialogue and good storytelling."

T-Mobile's spots — which featured Justin Bieber and Rob Gronkowski dancing, Kristen Schaal in a "50 Shades of Grey" parody and Martha Stewart and Snoop Dogg mixing talk about T-Mobile's unlimited data plan with innuendo about Snoop's marijuana habit, won raves from some — as did an ad from antioxidant drink maker Bai featuring Justin Timberlake and Christopher Walken.

This story has been corrected to note that a T-Mobile spot featured Justin Bieber, not Justin Timberlake.

Apple, Google, Uber join fight against Trump travel ban

By CHRIS GRYGIEL, Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) — Dozens of tech companies, including behemoths like Apple, Google, and Facebook, are siding with Washington state and Minnesota as they fight President Donald Trump's ban on refugees and travelers from seven predominantly Muslim countries from entering the United States.

The companies filed briefs late Sunday with a federal appellate court saying the Trump executive order hurts their businesses.

In their court filing with the San Francisco-based 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, a total of 97 companies said Trump's travel ban "hinders the ability of American companies to attract great talent; increases costs imposed on business; makes it more difficult for American firms to compete in the international marketplace."

The travel ban would prompt businesses to build operations outside the United States, said the companies. The long list of enterprises looking to join the fight against Trump are among the country's biggest, most high-profile businesses like Uber, eBay and Netflix.

The businesses are looking to help Washington and Minnesota as they sue Trump. The states have said the ban harmed residents and effectively mandated discrimination. The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals this weekend denied the administration's request to immediately set aside a Seattle judge's ruling that put a hold on the ban nationwide.

Trump's order applied to Iraq, Syria, Iran, Sudan, Libya, Somalia and Yemen — countries the administra-

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tion said raise terrorism concerns. The order sparked nationwide airport protests and caused confusion for many foreigners trying to reach the United States.

Trump has said he's trying to protect Americans. The government says the president has the authority to decide who can enter the country.

However the companies, in their court filing, said Trump's executive order would destroy the entrepreneurial spirit that fuels American businesses.

Immigrants make many of the nation's greatest discoveries, and create some of the country's most innovative and iconic companies," the court filing said. "The experience and energy of people who come to our country to seek a better life for themselves and their children_to pursue the 'American Dream'_are woven throughout the social, political, and economic fabric of the nation."

10 Things to Know for Today

By The Associated Press

Your daily look at late-breaking news, upcoming events and the stories that will be talked about today:

1. TWO STATES TELL COURT THAT RESTORING TRAVEL BAN WOULD "UNLEASH CHAOS"

The filings with a federal appeals court came early after the White House said it expected the courts to reinstate the ban on refugees and travelers from seven countries.

2. WHY NEW ENGLAND'S SUPER BOWL VICTORY WAS THE SWEETEST OF ALL

This Super Bowl was lost as the Patriots trailed the Falcons by 25 points. Then came the best comeback ever.

3. HOW SUPER BOWL ADS WENT POLITICAL

Airbnb touted inclusiveness with an ad showing faces of different ethnicities, while "It's a 10" hair brand indirectly referenced Trump's hair.

4. TRUMP TO MAKE FIRST VISIT TO U.S. CENTRAL COMMAND HEADQUARTERS

At MacDill Air Force Base, the president is to be briefed by CENTCOM and SOCOM leaders, join troops for lunch and deliver a speech.

5. WHAT YOU CAN LEARN FROM BUYING TOILET PAPER IN NORTH KOREA

The official and unofficial currency exchange rates are totally out of whack, which can severely hamper foreign investment and contribute to corruption and economic instability.

6. KREMLIN INDIGNANT THAT BILL O'REILLY CALLED PUTIN A "KILLER"

A spokesman for the Russian president called the Fox News journalist's comments "unacceptable and offensive" and demanded an apology.

7. WHY MORE CHILDREN ARE BEING KILLED IN AFGHANISTAN

A U.N. report found that the number of children killed in Afghanistan's conflict rose by 25 percent in 2016, mostly because of left-over or discarded munitions.

8. SEVEN PERCENT OF CATHOLIC PRIESTS IN AUSTRALIA ACCUSED OF SEXUAL ABUSE OVER DECADES

Officials investigating the abuse revealed for the first time the extent of the crisis.

9. TRUMP'S YOUNG SON DISCOVERING HOW TOUGH BEING A FIRST KID CAN BE

Ten-year-old Barron has been the target of jokes, reviving age-old questions about the sometimes less-than-kid glove treatment of presidential kids.

10. THE AMERICANS AN AP REPORTER MET DURING A CROSS-COUNTRY TRAIN TRIP

A hospice worker who now has cancer herself; a Texas university student saying goodbye to her Mexican grandparents; a man planning a surprise marriage proposal.

2 states say allowing travel ban would 'unleash chaos again'

By ERIC TUCKER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Lawyers for Washington state and Minnesota have told a federal appellate court that restoring President Donald Trump's ban on refugees and travelers from seven predominantly Muslim countries would "unleash chaos again."

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The filing with the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco came early Monday after the White House said it expected the federal courts to reinstate the ban.

Washington and Minnesota said their underlying lawsuit was strong and a nationwide temporary restraining order was appropriate. If the appellate court reinstated Trump's ban the states said the "ruling would reinstitute those harms, separating families, stranding our university students and faculty, and barring travel."

The rapid-fire legal maneuvers by the two states were accompanied by briefs filed by the technology industry arguing that the travel ban would harm their companies by making it more difficult to recruit employees. Tech giants like Apple and Google, along with Uber, filed their arguments with the court late Sunday.

Trump's executive order was founded on a claim of national security, but lawyers for the two states told the appellate court the administration's move hurts residents, businesses and universities and is unconstitutional.

The next opportunity for Trump's team to argue in favor of the ban will come in the form of a response to the Washington state and Minnesota filings. The 9th Circuit ordered the U.S. Justice Department to file its briefs by 6 p.m. EST Monday. It had already turned down a Justice request to set aside immediately a Seattle judge's ruling that put a temporary hold on the ban nationwide.

In the latest filing, lawyers for Washington state and Minnesota said: "Defendants now ask this Court to unleash chaos again by staying the district court order. The Court should decline."

That ruling last Friday prompted an ongoing Twitter rant by Trump, who dismissed U.S. District Court Judge James Robart as a "so-called judge" and his decision "ridiculous."

Trump renewed his Twitter attacks against Robart on Sunday. "Just cannot believe a judge would put our country in such peril. If something happens blame him and court system. People pouring in. Bad!" He followed with another tweet saying he had instructed the Homeland Security Department to check people coming into the country but that "the courts are making the job very difficult!"

Vice President Mike Pence said Sunday that "we don't appoint judges to our district courts to conduct foreign policy or to make decisions about the national security." Trump himself had offered an optimistic forecast the previous night, telling reporters during a weekend at his private club in Florida: "We'll win. For the safety of the country, we'll win."

The government had told the appeals court that the president alone has the power to decide who can enter or stay in the United States, an assertion that appeared to invoke the wider battle to come over illegal immigration.

Congress "vests complete discretion" in the president to impose conditions on entry of foreigners to the United States, and that power is "largely immune from judicial control," according to the court filing.

Sen. Dianne Feinstein, the top Democrat on the Judiciary Committee, predicted the appeals court would not have the last word. "I have no doubt that it will go to the Supreme Court, and probably some judgments will be made whether this president has exceed his authority or not," she said.

In his ruling, Robart said it was not the court's job to "create policy or judge the wisdom of any particular policy promoted by the other two branches," but to make sure that an action taken by the government "comports with our country's laws."

Whatever the outcome and however the case drags on, a president who was used to getting his way in private business is finding, weeks into his new job that obstacles exist to quickly fulfilling one of his chief campaign pledges.

"The president is not a dictator," said Feinstein, D-Calif. "He is the chief executive of our country. And there is a tension between the branches of government."

The Twitter attacks on Robart — appointed by President George W. Bush — prompted scolding from fellow Republicans as well as Democrats.

"We don't have so-called judges," said Sen. Ben Sasse, R-Neb. "We don't have so-called senators. We don't have so-called presidents. We have people from three different branches of government who take an oath to uphold and defend the Constitution."

However, Pence defended the president, saying he "can criticize anybody he wants." The vice president

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added that he believes the American people "find it very refreshing that they not only understand this president's mind, but they understand how he feels about things."

Trump's order applied to Iraq, Syria, Iran, Sudan, Libya, Somalia and Yemen — Muslim-majority countries that the administration said raise terrorism concerns. The order had caused unending confusion for many foreigners trying to reach the United States, prompting protests across the United States and leading to multiple court challenges.

The State Department said last week that as many as 60,000 foreigners from those seven countries had had their visas canceled. After Robart's decision, the department reversed course and said they could travel to the U.S. if they had a valid visa.

The department also advised refugee aid agencies that refugees set to travel before Trump signed his order would now be allowed in.

The Homeland Security Department no longer was directing airlines to prevent visa-holders affected by Trump's order from boarding U.S.-bound planes. The agency said it had "suspended any and all actions" related to putting in place Trump's order.

Pence appeared on ABC's "This Week," CBS' "Face the Nation," NBC's "Meet the Press" and "Fox News Sunday." McConnell was on CNN, Feinstein spoke on Fox and Sasse was interviewed by ABC.

Republicans seek distance from Trump's comments on Putin, US

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE, Associated Press

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (AP) — President Donald Trump has long expressed a desire for improved relations with Moscow, but his latest comments about Russian President Vladimir Putin and the U.S. are leading some fellow Republicans to take a step back from the president — on this issue at least.

Told by Fox News' Bill O'Reilly during an interview that the Russian leader is "a killer," Trump said the U.S. has killers, too.

"What do you think? Our country's so innocent?" Trump said during the taped interview broadcast during Sunday's Super Bowl pregame show.

Trump has praised Putin and signaled that U.S.-Russia relations could be in for a makeover under his leadership, even after U.S. intelligence agencies concluded that Russia meddled in the 2016 U.S. presidential campaign to help Trump defeat Democrat Hillary Clinton.

During Putin's years in power, a number of prominent Russian opposition figures and journalists have been killed.

Trump says in the interview that he respects a lot of people, including Putin "but that doesn't mean I'm going to get along with him. He's a leader of his country. I say it's better to get along with Russia than not. And if Russia helps us in the fight against ISIS, which is a major fight, and Islamic terrorism all over the world — that's a good thing," Trump said, using an acronym for the Islamic State group. "Will I get along with him? I have no idea."

O'Reilly then said about Putin: "But he's a killer, though. Putin's a killer."

Trump responded: "There are a lot of killers. We've got a lot of killers. What do you think? Our country's so innocent?"

When O'Reilly says he doesn't know any U.S. government leaders who are killers, Trump said "take a look at what we've done, too. We've made a lot of mistakes" and then he referenced the Iraq war.

The Kremlin voiced anger over O'Reilly's characterization.

Dmitry Peskov, a spokesman for President Vladimir Putin, refused to comment on Trump's reply but lashed out at Fox, calling O'Reilly's remarks "unacceptable and offensive."

"We would like to receive an apology to the president from this respected organization," Peskov told reporters on Monday, referring to Fox News.

At home, Republicans and Democrats took exception to Trump's comparison of Russia and the U.S.

"Putin's a former KGB agent. He's a thug. He was not elected in a way that most people would consider a credible election," Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., told CNN's "State of the Union." "The Russians annexed Crimea, invaded Ukraine and messed around in our elections. And no, I don't think there's any equivalency between the way the Russians conduct themselves and the way the United States does."

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Added Sen. Ben Sasse, of Nebraska, one of Trump's Republican critics: "There is no moral equivalency between the United States of America, the greatest freedom living nation in the history of the world, and the murderous thugs that are in Putin's defense of his cronyism.

O'Reilly also asked Trump to back up his claim that some 3 million to 5 million illegal votes were cast in the election. Trump didn't answer directly, but shifted to assert that immigrants in the U.S. illegally and dead people are on the voter rolls.

"It's really a bad situation, it's really bad," Trump said.

There is no evidence of widespread voter fraud in the Nov. 8 election. Trump won the Electoral College vote but lost the popular vote by nearly 2.9 million votes to Clinton.

Trump recently announced on Twitter that he would call for a "major investigation" into voter fraud. He said during the Fox News interview that he will set up a commission to be headed by Vice President Mike Pence and "we're going to look at it very, very carefully."

Asked earlier about Trump's promised investigation, McConnell said he saw no federal role because states historically have handled voter fraud investigations. "I don't think we ought to spend any federal money investigating that," he said on CNN.

On other issues, Trump said in the interview that:

—California's consideration of legislation to become a statewide sanctuary for people living in the country illegally is "ridiculous." He suggested withholding federal funding as a possible punishment.

—Plans to enact a complete replacement for the Affordable Care Act could slip into next year. "I would like to say by the end of the year, at least the rudiments, but we should have something within the year and the following year."

—Living in the White House is "a surreal experience in a certain way, but you have to get over it, because there's so much work to be done."

Follow Darlene Superville on Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/dsuperville>

Is it tough being a kid? Try being a president's kid

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — If it's tough being a kid, try being a "first kid" — the child of an American president. Just ask President Bill Clinton's daughter, Chelsea. Or President George W. Bush's twins, Jenna and Barbara. And now, President Donald Trump's youngest child, Barron, is finding out.

Ten-year-old Barron was the target of a poorly received joke tweeted by a "Saturday Night Live" writer on Jan. 20 as the new first family reveled in Inauguration Day events. Separately in Chicago, comedian Shannon Noll played the title character in "Barron Trump: Up Past Bedtime," which had a recent run at a theater in Hyde Park.

Both instances have revived age-old questions about the sometimes less-than-kid-glove treatment of presidential kids.

"I think the children are off-limits," said Lisa Caputo, who was White House press secretary when "Saturday Night Live" made fun of then-13-year-old Chelsea Clinton. "They didn't run for public office, they don't hold an official role."

"SNL" cast member Mike Meyers sent the Clintons a letter of apology after the incident.

The teenage Chelsea Clinton also was mocked by talk radio host Rush Limbaugh, who called her a dog. Katie Rich, the "SNL" writer who tweeted about Barron, was suspended indefinitely. After deleting the tweet and deactivating her Twitter account, she reactivated the account, saying she wanted to "sincerely apologize" for the "insensitive" tweet and that she deeply regretted her actions.

"It was inexcusable & I'm so sorry," Rich said. Fellow comedians have risen to her defense, but Noll told the Chicago Reader that she has been the subject of a social media backlash, including death threats, as well as homophobic, transphobic, anti-Semitic and racist comments directed at her. The theater has also been harassed.

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All presidents and first ladies seek a life outside the spotlight for minor children who live in the 132-room mansion, except when they themselves put their kids in the spotlight.

Days after the incident involving Rich, the White House appealed for respect for Barron's privacy.

"It is a longstanding tradition that the children of presidents are afforded the opportunity to grow up outside of the political spotlight," the White House press office said in a brief statement. "The White House fully expects this tradition to continue."

That same week, Trump told Sean Hannity of Fox News that it was "a disgrace" for NBC "to attack my 10-year-old son." Trump also suggested the dustup may have bothered Barron, who has only been seen publicly during big moments of the past year, such as the night Trump addressed the Republican National Convention and election night. He continues to live full-time in New York City with his mother, first lady Melania Trump.

"It's not an easy thing for him. Believe me," Trump said of his son.

In contrast, Trump's adult children, Don Jr., Eric, Ivanka and Tiffany, are sharing the limelight with their famous father. Don Jr. and Eric are running the family business, and Ivanka could end up joining the administration. All three Trump children sat in on meetings their father conducted before and after he took office.

Doug Wead, who wrote a book about the children of presidents, said it's the "ultimate hurt" when the offspring become the vehicle for the ire that some grownups wish they could direct toward the president. He said kids become targets because they're seen as weak.

"Barron can't fight back," Wead said.

Anita McBride, who worked for three Republican presidents and was first lady Laura Bush's chief of staff, said President Barack Obama and his wife, Michelle, did a good job shielding their daughters from most public scrutiny. Bush's daughters were college-bound when he was elected in 2000, so they didn't live in the White House. But their underage drinking made headlines.

"Why in a matter of 24 hours should it be different for this child?" McBride said of Barron.

And Chelsea Clinton said on Twitter that "Barron Trump deserves the chance every child does — to be a kid." But she also added that standing up for kids means opposing Trump policies that hurt them.

The supportive tweet from the former first daughter — who is good friends with Barron's sister Ivanka — shed light on the exclusive club of "first children," who seem to be looking out for one another.

Jenna and Barbara Bush recently applauded Malia and Sasha Obama for surviving the "unbelievable pressure of the White House" and enduring "harsh criticism of your parents by people" who don't know them.

"Take all that you have seen, the people you have met, the lessons you have learned, and let that help guide you in making positive change. We have no doubt you will," they encouraged the Obama girls in a letter. The Bush sisters also wrote a letter to the Obama girls when they moved into the White House in 2009 at ages 10 and 7.

Wead said few tears should be shed over the fact that these children sometimes get rough treatment from the public.

As children of privilege, they are steps ahead of so many of their peers.

"Two of them became presidents themselves," Wead said, referring to George W. Bush, son of President George H.W. Bush, and John Quincy Adams, son of President John Adams.

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Trump to make first visit to MacDill Air Force Base

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE, Associated Press

PALM BEACH, Fla. (AP) — President Donald Trump is making his first visit to the headquarters for U.S. Central Command and U.S. Special Operations Command.

Both military commands are headquartered at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, Florida.

Trump, who is also commander in chief of the U.S. military, was heading to the base Monday on the way back to Washington after his first weekend away from the White House. Trump spent the weekend at his

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estate in Palm Beach, Florida, with first lady Melania Trump, who had not appeared in public since shortly after her husband took office.

At MacDill, the president is to be briefed by CENTCOM and SOCOM leaders, join troops for lunch and deliver a speech. Gen. Joseph Dunford, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Michael Flynn, Trump's national security adviser, were expected to attend the meetings.

Trump also planned to meet with Florida Gov. Rick Scott before the flight to Washington.

CENTCOM oversaw a recent raid by U.S. special operations forces on an al-Qaida compound in Yemen, the first military operation authorized by Trump. A Navy SEAL, Chief Special Warfare Operator William "Ryan" Owens, 36, of Peoria, Illinois, was killed, making him the first known U.S. combat casualty under Trump.

Three other U.S. service members were wounded in the operation. More than half a dozen suspected militants and more than a dozen civilians were also killed, including the 8-year-old daughter of Anwar al-Awlaki, a radical cleric and U.S. citizen who was targeted and killed in 2011 by a U.S. drone strike.

Trump traveled to Dover Air Force Base in Delaware last week to be present when Owens' remains were returned to his family.

During his weekly address last Friday, Trump paid tribute to Owens as a "brave and selfless patriot."

"We will never forget him. We will never ever forget those who serve. Believe me," Trump said. Trump also talked in the address about his responsibility to keep the American people safe, and mentioned the executive order he signed late last month suspending the U.S. refugee program as well as travel to the U.S. by citizens of seven mostly Muslim countries.

The executive order has been met with challenges in federal court and protests around the country.

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UN: 25-percent increase in Afghan children killed in 2016

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — The number of children killed in Afghanistan's conflict rose by 25 percent in 2016, according to the United Nations Mission in Afghanistan.

The 2016 Annual Report on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict in Afghanistan, released on Monday, documents an overall 3-percent rise in civilian casualties — both deaths and injuries — from the previous year.

The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) attributed the disproportionate spike in child casualties in 2016 mainly to a 66-percent increase in casualties from left-over or discarded munitions. The report states that 923 children in Afghanistan were killed in 2016, a 25-percent increase from the previous year. The number of children injured rose by about 23 percent. Overall it was the highest number of casualties among children ever recorded in a single year by UNAMA.

"Conflict-related violence exacted a heavy toll on Afghanistan in 2016, with an overall deterioration in civilian protection and the highest-total civilian casualties recorded since 2009, when UNAMA began systematic documentation of civilian casualties," the report stated.

It says that between Jan. 1 and Dec. 31, 2016, the mission documented 11,418 civilian casualties — 3,498 deaths and 7,920 wounded. That marked a 2-percent decrease in civilian deaths and a 6-percent increase in civilians wounded, amounting to an overall 3-percent increase in casualties compared to 2015.

"This appalling conflict destroys lives and tears communities apart in every corner of Afghanistan," the report quoted Tadamichi Yamamoto, United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan, as saying. "Real protection of civilians requires commitment and demonstrated concrete actions to protect civilians from harm and for parties to the conflict to ensure accountability for indiscriminate and deliberate acts of civilian harm."

7 percent of Australian Catholic priests accused of abuse

By KRISTEN GELINEAU, Associated Press

SYDNEY (AP) — Seven percent of priests in Australia's Catholic Church were accused of sexually abusing children over the past several decades, a lawyer said Monday as officials investigating institutional abuse across Australia revealed for the first time the extent of the crisis.

The statistics were released during the opening address of a hearing of Australia's Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The royal commission — which is Australia's highest form of inquiry — has been investigating since 2013 how the Catholic Church and other institutions responded to the sexual abuse of children over decades.

The commission has previously heard harrowing testimony from scores of people who suffered abuse at the hands of clergy. But the full scale of the problem was never clear until Monday, when the commission released the statistics it has gathered.

Commissioners surveyed Catholic Church authorities and found that between 1980 and 2015, 4,444 people reported they had been abused at more than 1,000 Catholic institutions across Australia, said Gail Furness, the lead lawyer assisting the commission. The average age of the victims was 10.5 for girls and 11.5 for boys.

Overall, 7 percent of priests in Australia between 1950 and 2010 were accused of sexually abusing children, Furness said.

Francis Sullivan, CEO of the Truth Justice and Healing Council, which is coordinating the Catholic Church's response to the inquiry, said the data reflected "a massive failure" by the church to protect children.

"These numbers are shocking, they are tragic and they are indefensible," a tearful Sullivan told the commission. "As Catholics, we hang our heads in shame."

The Vatican has watched the proceedings closely. Cardinal George Pell, who was Australia's most senior Catholic before becoming Pope Francis' top financial adviser, has testified at previous hearings about how church authorities responded to allegations of child sex abuse during his time in Australia.

Several senior Australian Catholics will be testifying over the next few weeks. The commission's final report is due by the end of this year.

Travelers arrive in US to hugs and tears after ban is lifted

By DENISE LAVOIE and WILLIAM MATHIS, Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — Travelers from the seven predominantly Muslim countries targeted by President Donald Trump enjoyed tearful reunions with loved ones in the U.S. on Sunday after a federal judge swept the ban aside.

Airlines around the world allowed people to board flights as usual to the United States. One lawyer waiting at New York's Kennedy Airport said visa and green-card holders from Iraq and Iran were encountering no problems as they arrived.

"It's business as usual," said Camille Mackler, of the New York Immigration Coalition.

Fariba Tajrostami, a 32-year-old painter from Iran, came through the gate at Kennedy with a huge smile and tears in her eyes as her brothers greeted her with joyful hugs.

"I'm very happy. I haven't seen my brothers for nine years," she said.

Tajrostami had tried to fly to the U.S. from Turkey over a week ago but was turned away.

"I was crying and was so disappointed," she said. "Everything I had in mind, what I was going to do, I was so disappointed about everything. I thought it was all over."

Tajrostami said she hopes to study art in the U.S. and plans to join her husband in Dallas soon. He moved from Iran six months ago, has a green card and is working at a car dealership.

Similar scenes played out across the U.S. two days after a federal judge in Seattle suspended the president's travel ban and just hours after a federal appeals court denied the Trump administration's request to set aside the ruling.

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The U.S. canceled the visas of up to 60,000 foreigners in the week after the ban on travel from Syria, Iraq, Iran, Sudan, Somalia, Libya and Yemen took effect, according to the State Department. Trump also suspended nearly all refugee admissions for 120 days and barred Syrian refugees indefinitely.

The order triggered protests and a multitude of legal challenges around the country and blocked numerous college students, researchers and others from entering the U.S.

Trump, who said the goal was to keep terrorists from slipping into the country, lashed out against U.S. District Judge James Robart for putting the ban on hold. He referred to Robart as a "so-called judge" and called the ruling "ridiculous."

On Sunday, the president tweeted: "Just cannot believe a judge would put our country in such peril. If something happens blame him and court system. People pouring in. Bad!"

At JFK on Sunday evening, Abdullah Alghazali hugged and kissed his 13-year-old son, Ali Abdullah Alghazali, who he had not seen in six years. That wait was made even longer by Trump's executive order.

Ali and his mother, Musarlah Alghazali, had left Yemen a year and a half ago to Egypt because of the war at home. Musarlah came to the U.S. two and a half months ago, but Ali stayed behind in Egypt with cousins while he waited for his visa to be approved. The boy was not able to leave until last Saturday, after the executive order was in effect.

"When he went to the airport to come over here they stopped him last week, Saturday. I tried again the next week, Thursday, but they put him back again," Abdullah said. "They said they had an order from the US government to not allow anybody with a visa or green card to come to the United States."

Mahsa Azabadi, 29, an Iranian-American who lives in Denver, was forced to put her wedding plans on hold after her fiance, Sorena Behzadfar, was turned away when he tried to board a plane to travel from Iran to the U.S. on Jan. 28.

Over the weekend, though, Behzadfar was cleared for travel and was expected to arrive at Boston's Logan Airport on Sunday afternoon.

"It's been a really tough week to figure out what will happen to us," said Azabadi, who has lived in the U.S. for 11 years and is now a U.S. citizen.

The couple is hoping to keep their wedding date of May 12.

"Seeing the support from the lawyers and different people trying to help, it was really nice," she said. "We want to be the best and do the best for the people and for this country. We would love to have the opportunity."

An Iranian woman attempting to return home from Iran after initially being blocked from entry cleared through an immigration check in Boston and was expected to return home to Clemson, South Carolina, on Monday.

Nazanin Zinouri was taken off a plane in Dubai days after the travel ban went into effect. Zinouri, a legal U.S. resident, had traveled to Iran last month to visit family.

Eric Martinez, the founder of the startup technology firm where Zinouri works, said she planned to watch the Super Bowl on Sunday in Boston.

Iranian researcher Nima Enayati, a Ph.D. candidate at a university in Milan, was prevented from boarding a flight to the U.S. on Jan. 30. He had a visa to conduct research on robotic surgery at Stanford University in California.

On Sunday night, he arrived in New York.

"It feels great finally I'm here," Enayati said at JFK. "Considering the last 10 days we had no idea if we'll be able to make it or not."

Enayati said he feels safe for now, but worries that the travel ban could inhibit research in the future.

"We always had this open collaboration around the world," he said. "We never had concerns about whether we would be able to go somewhere physically or not."

At Cairo Airport on Sunday, officials said a total of 33 U.S.-bound migrants from Yemen, Syria and Iraq boarded flights.

Lebanon's National News Agency said airlines operating out of Beirut also began allowing Syrian families

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and others affected by the ban to fly. Beirut has no direct flights to the U.S.; travelers have to go through Europe.

At Kennedy, a team of volunteer lawyers that had set up operations in a diner to help arriving passengers during the height of the crisis packed up computer equipment and paperwork. A few volunteers and interpreters will stay behind just in case.

Associated Press writer Emery Dalesio contributed to this report from Raleigh, North Carolina. Mathis contributed from New York City.

White House predicts courts will reinstate travel ban

By ERIC TUCKER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Rebuffed in its bid for a quick reversal, the White House said Sunday it expected the courts to reaffirm President Donald Trump's executive power and reinstate a ban on refugees and travelers from seven predominantly Muslim countries from entering the United States.

The case promised to extend into Monday at least, when fresh legal filings were due, and observers had no doubt the Supreme Court ultimately will have a say.

The San Francisco-based 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, in a brief order overnight, denied the administration's request to set aside a Seattle judge's ruling that put a temporary hold on the ban nationwide.

The lawsuit by Washington state and Minnesota said Trump's order harmed residents and effectively mandated discrimination. Their lawyers had until 2:59 a.m. EST Monday to submit briefs opposing the government's request. The Justice Department then had a 6 p.m. EST deadline to respond.

"We'll accomplish the stay and will win the case on the merits," Vice President Mike Pence said.

Members of Trump's Republican Party scolded him for Twitter attacks on U.S. District Court Judge James Robart, appointed by President George W. Bush, and accused Trump of stepping over the line that separates the executive from the judiciary. To Trump, Robart is a "so-called judge" whose "ridiculous" ruling "will be overturned."

Trump renewed his Twitter attacks against Robart on Sunday. "Just cannot believe a judge would put our country in such peril. If something happens blame him and court system. People pouring in. Bad!"

He followed with another tweet saying he had instructed the Homeland Security Department to check people coming into the country but that "the courts are making the job very difficult!"

Vice President Mike Pence defended Trump, saying "the president can criticize anybody he wants." Pence added that he believes the American people "find it very refreshing that they not only understand this president's mind, but they understand how he feels about things."

At issue is the legality of a presidential action undertaken in the name of national security. Whatever the outcome and however the case drags on, a president who was used to getting his way in private business is finding, weeks in to the jobs, obstacles to quickly fulfilling one of his chief campaign pledges.

"The president is not a dictator," said Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif. "He is the chief executive of our country. And there is a tension between the branches of government."

The government had told the appeals court that the president alone has the power to decide who can enter or stay in the United States, an assertion that appeared to invoke the wider battle to come over illegal immigration.

Congress "vests complete discretion" in the president to impose conditions on entry of foreigners to the United States, and that power is "largely immune from judicial control," according to the court filing.

"We don't appoint judges to our district courts to conduct foreign policy or to make decisions about the national security," Pence said.

Feinstein, the top Democrat on the Senate Judiciary Committee, predicted the appeals court would not have the last word. "I have no doubt that it will go to the Supreme Court, and probably some judgments will be made whether this president has exceeded his authority or not," she said.

In his ruling, Robart said it was not the court's job to "create policy or judge the wisdom of any particular policy promoted by the other two branches," but to make sure that an action taken by the government

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"comports with our country's laws."

Trump's order applied to Iraq, Syria, Iran, Sudan, Libya, Somalia and Yemen — Muslim-majority countries that the administration said raise terrorism concerns. The order had caused unending confusion for many foreigners trying to reach the United States, prompted protests across the United States and led to multiple court challenges.

Trump's criticism of Robart echoed campaign comments against a federal judge of Mexican heritage who was overseeing a lawsuit against Trump University. Justice Department lawyers could be called upon to answer for Trump's words as the travel ban case makes it way through the courts.

"We all get disappointed from time to time at the outcome in courts on things that we care about," said Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky. "But I think it is best to avoid criticizing judges individually."

Sen. Ben Sasse, R-Neb., was blunter: "We don't have so-called judges. We don't have so-called senators. We don't have so-called presidents. We have people from three different branches of government who take an oath to uphold and defend the Constitution."

The State Department said last week that as many as 60,000 foreigners from those seven countries had had their visas canceled. After Robart's decision, the department reversed course and said they could travel to the U.S. if they had a valid visa.

The department also advised refugee aid agencies that refugees set to travel before Trump signed his order would now be allowed in.

The Homeland Security Department no longer was directing airlines to prevent visa-holders affected by Trump's order from boarding U.S.-bound planes. The agency said it had "suspended any and all actions" related to putting in place Trump's order.

Pence appeared on ABC's "This Week," CBS' "Face the Nation," NBC's "Meet the Press" and "Fox News Sunday." McConnell was on CNN, Feinstein spoke on Fox and Sasse was interviewed by ABC.

Despite White House warning, Israel pushes settlement bill

By JOSEF FEDERMAN, Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel's prime minister is moving ahead with a contentious law that would legalize dozens of settlement outposts in the West Bank, despite claims by experts that the bill itself is illegal and a warning from the White House that settlement construction "may not be helpful."

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is under intense pressure from members of his coalition to bring the bill to a vote in parliament following last week's court-ordered demolition of an illegally built settlement outpost. But he risks drawing angry international condemnations, possibly even from the ostensibly friendly Trump administration, if he pushes forward.

Netanyahu's nationalist coalition is dominated by West Bank settlers and their supporters. The Jewish Home, a powerful coalition ally, has been leading the calls to vote on the outpost law this week, perhaps as soon as Monday. The Jewish Home believes that with a friendly president in office, it is time for Netanyahu to lay out a clear policy for the West Bank, including the possible annexation of parts of the occupied territory.

Netanyahu has sent mixed signals about the legislation, publicly voicing support for it while also reportedly expressing private misgivings. On Sunday, he indicated that he might once again delay the vote in a possible sign he is rethinking his support.

Jewish Home lawmaker Shuli Moalem-Refaeli, one of the bill's sponsors, said that the West Bank is dotted with outposts that she claimed had been built over the years in "good faith" and should now be legalized.

"What has been established cannot be destroyed," she told Israel Radio.

Israel's powerful settler lobby was jolted last week by the court-ordered demolition of Amona, an outpost found to have been built on private Palestinian land. Over 40 families were forced from their homes, putting pressure on the government to respond. Proponents of the new legislation are bent on passing it to prevent similar scenes from taking place.

The bill would retroactively legalize several thousand homes built illegally on private Palestinian land.

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The original landowners would be compensated either with money or alternative land, even if they do not agree to give up their property.

Critics have said the bill will not pass legal muster. Netanyahu's own attorney general has said he will not defend the bill before the country's Supreme Court, and Netanyahu has reportedly expressed concerns that the legislation could strengthen a case against Israel in the International Criminal Court.

"People on the right haven't got the courage to tell the settlers the truth," Tzachi Hanegbi, a member of Netanyahu's Likud Party, said over the weekend. "It is reasonable to assume that the bill will not pass."

Dan Meridor, a former justice minister and Likud member, said the bill is problematic because it would affect Palestinians living on occupied territory that is not part of Israel and who do not have the right to vote.

"The idea is that we are taking land from someone, accidentally or not, and then are getting rid of him without him getting in a word, without him participating in the legislation," he said. "This is something destructive that must be stopped."

The American Jewish Congress, a mainstream pro-Israel Jewish organization in the U.S., on Sunday called on Israeli legislators to reject the bill, saying it undermined hopes for a two-state solution with the Palestinians.

Adalah, an Israeli group that protects Arab rights, said it would immediately file a challenge in the Supreme Court if the bill is approved.

"This sweeping and dangerous law permits the expropriation of vast tracts of private Palestinian land, giving absolute preference to the political interests of Israel as an occupying power and to Israeli settlers," said Suhad Bishara, a lawyer with the group.

Legal troubles are just one of Netanyahu's considerations. The international community overwhelmingly opposes the settlements and sees them as an obstacle to peace.

The Palestinians claim the West Bank and east Jerusalem, captured by Israel in the 1967 Mideast war, as parts of a future state. They say the settlements, home to 600,000 Israelis, are making it increasingly impossible to partition the land into two states — a position that has wide international backing. In December, President Barack Obama allowed the U.N. Security Council to pass a resolution declaring settlements illegal.

After repeatedly clashing with Obama, Netanyahu is optimistic about a new era of relations with Trump, who harshly criticized the U.N. resolution.

Trump has signaled a far more sympathetic approach to the settlements, raising hopes in Netanyahu's government that it will be able to step up construction.

But after Netanyahu announced plans to build over 6,000 new settler homes during Trump's first two weeks in office, the White House over the weekend signaled that it too may have its limits.

"While we don't believe the existence of settlements is an impediment to peace, the construction of new settlements or the expansion of existing settlements beyond their current borders may not be helpful in achieving that goal," the White House said.

Netanyahu said he was looking forward to discussing the matter at the White House on Feb. 15.

Amid these misgivings, Netanyahu late Sunday signaled that he might once again delay the vote, which had also been scheduled last week. An official in the Likud Party said Netanyahu was trying to consult with the new U.S. administration to see how it would react. The official spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss internal party deliberations.

But a vote remained scheduled for late Monday, shortly after Netanyahu is to return from a one-day visit to London for talks with Prime Minister Theresa May. As he boarded his flight, Netanyahu remained vague about his plans.

"I hear all the time disingenuous ultimatums. I don't get excited," Netanyahu said in an apparent reference to his Jewish Home allies. "When I manage the country, I think about our national interest. I act only according to this."

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For Trump foes, Democratic gains may remain elusive in 2018

By DAVID A. LIEB, Associated Press

Passionate protests against Donald Trump's presidency have swelled the ranks of Democratic activists, but their new enthusiasm faces a hard reality: Republicans remain well-positioned to retain their grip on power in the 2018 elections.

While Republicans hold only a slim majority in the U.S. Senate, Democrats occupy most of the seats up for election in two years. That means they must play defense against Republicans, especially in 10 states that Trump won.

In the U.S. House, Republicans will be aided by favorable district boundaries that were drawn to maintain GOP political dominance. In some cases, the congressional districts were gerrymandered to pack high numbers of Democratic voters into just a few districts as a way to create a greater number of Republican-leaning seats.

"Democrats are extremely fired up right now," said Sam Wang, a Princeton University neuroscientist and statistician who has developed a statistical model for analyzing partisan gerrymandering.

But for Democrats to win back Congress, Wang said it "would take an extreme event. The question is, are we seeing something that's headed towards that?"

The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee is targeting 59 Republican-held House seats in 24 states as it builds toward the next election. Those include 23 districts where Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton defeated Trump and various others that Republicans took away from Democrats in recent years.

It also is beginning to place full-time paid organizers in 20 of those districts, something the committee says it has never done at this early stage.

The Democratic committee is touting a surge of 675,000 new supporters in January, many of whom joined the cause amid nationwide protests against Trump's policies. Whether that energy can be sustained through 2018 remains to be seen.

National Republican Congressional Committee spokesman Jesse Hunt calls the Democratic optimism a "pipe dream." Hunt notes that Democrats also held high hopes for 2016, but unseated just four of the 15 freshmen GOP representatives they targeted.

Democrats would appear to have history on their side. The president's party has lost ground in Congress in all but two of the initial midterm elections since the Civil War. The exceptions are 1934, when President Franklin Roosevelt was guiding the country through the Great Depression, and 2002, when President George W. Bush was leading the response to the 2001 terrorist attacks.

In the 2010 election during the middle of President Barack Obama's first term, Republicans flipped more than five dozen seats to take control of the U.S. House away from Democrats. Republicans also won control of a majority of state legislative chambers and governors' offices that year.

They then used that statehouse power to help cement their control in Washington by redrawing congressional districts following the 2010 Census.

In 2012, the first election under those new maps, Republicans won a 33-seat majority in the U.S. House even though Democratic candidates across the country received 1.4 million more votes than their Republican opponents.

Although court rulings have since forced the redrawing of some districts, many of those boundaries remain in place for the 2018 elections.

Wang estimates Democratic congressional candidates would need to win the 2018 nationwide vote by 7 to 12 percentage points to capture enough seats to win control of the House. The last time Democrats enjoyed such a spread was 2008, he said.

But circumstances have changed since then.

"There are just more districts at the moment that have a natural tilt toward Republicans, partly because of Democratic geography and partly because of Republicans drawing districts with an eye toward helping pick up more seats for their party," said Michael Barber, an assistant political science professor at Brigham Young University who has studied the effects of gerrymandering and incumbency on congressional elections.

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Former Attorney General Eric Holder recently signed on as chairman of the new National Democratic Redistricting Committee, which is attempting to better position Democrats for the 2021 redistricting by winning key statehouse races and court cases in the coming years.

"There's a lot of work to be done," said Iowa-based Democratic consultant Jim Kottmeyer. "Redistricting is a real problem, but the bigger problem is frankly that Democratic votes are just way too concentrated in too small of geographic areas" — big cities, instead of America's many small and mid-size towns.

The realities of the electoral map have tempered the optimism of some newly invigorated Democratic activists.

Since Election Day, Philadelphia physician Rhea Powell has marched with other women in Washington, protested in her home town against the potential repeal of Obama's health care law and joined in airport demonstrations against Trump's immigration restrictions. She has even enrolled in a program that trains potential Democratic candidates.

But she also understands that victories may be difficult, at least in the near term.

"I am worried that because of the impact that gerrymandering has had on many of the districts that it may be hard to make big changes" in the 2018 elections, Powell said.

Other new activists believe it's possible to win even with unfavorable districts.

"I think there'll always be barriers ... (but) we're not just going to sit back and shake our head and say, 'OK, well, I guess that's it,'" said Mary Clauss, a small business owner from suburban Chicago who recently marched in Washington and now is organizing other women in her community.

Ironically, Democratic chances for huge congressional gains may depend on Trump's success at enacting his agenda. The Republican wave in 2010 was fueled by voter backlash against Obama's policies, headlined by the health care law that quickly became known as "Obamacare."

"Politicians sometimes think that they made promises and their voters want them to keep them, but the historical pattern is the opposite — that public opinion moves against the direction of policy change," said political scientist Matt Grossmann, director of the Institute for Public Policy and Social Research at Michigan State University.

"So the more Donald Trump is successful — and the Republican Party is successful — in moving policy to the right, the bigger the backlash is likely to be."

Follow David A. Lieb at: <http://twitter.com/DavidALieb>

2 magnitude 5.3 earthquakes jolt Turkey; minor damage caused

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — Two earthquakes with preliminary magnitudes of 5.3 jolted Turkey's northern Aegean coast on Monday, damaging dozens of homes in at least five villages and injuring at least five people.

The first quake was centered beneath the Aegean off the coast from the town of Ayvacik in Turkey's northwestern Canakkale province and struck at 6:51 a.m. (0351 GMT), the government's crisis management agency said. The second temblor occurred at 1:58 p.m. (1058 GMT) and was centered in Ayvacik. The seismology center also recorded an aftershock measuring 4.9.

Orhan Tavli, the governor for Canakkale, said around 90 homes were damaged in the first quake and at least five people were hospitalized with minor injuries. Tents were being dispatched to temporarily house those whose homes were damaged.

The state-run Anadolu news agency said the villages of Tasagil, Tuzla, Yukari, Cam and Gulpinar — near Ayvacik — were affected.

Earthquakes are common in Turkey, which sits on top of active fault lines.

North Korean economics 101: How much is a dollar worth?

By ERIC TALMADGE, Associated Press

PYONGYANG, North Korea (AP) — To get a feel for how North Korea's economy works, go buy a roll of toilet paper. Or start up a mobile phone network.

As capitalist-style markets have grown more important in North Korea, so has a market-friendly exchange rate for the much-coveted U.S. dollars, euros and Chinese yuan that lubricate the North's economy. But the official and unofficial rates are totally out of whack. And as one big investor recently found out, the difference can mean hundreds of millions of dollars in lost profits.

Dueling exchange rates are a common issue for developing countries that have an official premium rate set by the government, often for political purposes that don't reflect economic realities and are therefore often ignored in the marketplace.

The discrepancy can severely hamper foreign investment, undermine confidence in the local currency and contribute to corruption and economic instability.

But nowhere in the world is the gap bigger than North Korea, according to Steve Hanke, a professor of applied economics at the Johns Hopkins University who specializes in hyperinflation,

"The North Korean won's black market premium is the highest in the world: a fantastic 6,440 percent," he said. For comparison's sake, the black market premium for the Syrian pound is "only" 144.3 percent of the official rate, he said.

What does such a system look like on the ground?

If you pick up that roll of toilet paper in a shop catering to foreigners, tourists or the relatively affluent elite in the capital, it would probably have a price tag in the 200-400 won range, or \$2-4. The prices in won are calculated according to the official exchange rate. In reality, you can't actually pay in won, at least not at that rate.

Typical Pyongyang residents, meanwhile, are more likely to do their shopping at a place like the Kwangbok Department Store, which does take won and therefore uses an entirely different pricing system. Here, a roll of toilet paper costs 1,400 won. An exchange booth right next to the checkout counter posts the day's rates — not the official 108-or-so won to the dollar, but a whopping 8,000-plus.

"The official rate is a political rate," Hanke said. "It is, therefore, totally arbitrary and no one really knows how it is determined. The black-market rate is a free-market rate. The supply and demand for dollars and won on the black market calls the tune and sets the rate."

Most North Koreans don't have foreign currency to begin with and don't shop in upscale stores, so the system is fairly invisible most of the time.

On a larger scale, it has major ramifications.

One of North Korea's biggest recent success stories has been the rapid spread of mobile phones, now in the millions, thanks to capital and expertise invested by the Egyptian conglomerate Orascom. The venture, Orascom Telecom Media and Technology, was hugely profitable, but rather predictably hit a big wall when it tried to get its earnings out of North Korea.

In late 2015, it announced a huge loss after North Korea insisted it use the unofficial rate to convert its profits into dollars, turning what would have been \$450 million into a mere \$8 million.

CEO Naguib Sawiris resigned on Jan. 1 this year.

Sawiris refused to comment to the AP until after the company releases its next financial report. But the company, which has staff working out of a hotel in Pyongyang, is apparently still waiting to get even its \$8 million out of North Korea.

The importance of the unofficial exchange rate has grown tremendously since the 1990s, when the collapse of the Soviet bloc and natural disasters that devastated harvests took North Korea's economy to the verge of collapse. Citizens who previously relied on the government for their needs had to learn how to fend for themselves.

The result was the rise of an unofficial, but by now well-established, capitalist-style market, where prices are competitive and determined by supply and demand. Transactions are primarily made in cash. Outside

experts estimate that half or even more of all economic activity in the North is done in this gray zone.

The transformation has not been without its shocks.

In 2009, leader Kim Jong Un's father, Kim Jong Il, ordered a revaluation of the won, effectively cutting two zeros off the value of each bill. That appears to have been an attempt to reassert control over nouveaux riches who had profited too much from the gray market and were seen as a potential political threat.

That put the country through a severe bout of hyperinflation from late 2009 to early 2011. Monthly inflation peaked at 496 percent in March 2010, according to Hanke's calculations, and the value of the won on the black market collapsed.

To the surprise of many, the won appears to have rebounded and stayed within a fairly stable range, both officially and at the unofficial rate, since Kim Jong Un assumed power in late 2011.

"This is a major quandary, and an apparent success story of the Kim regime," said William Brown, an adjunct professor at Georgetown University and non-resident fellow at the Korea Economic Institute of America. "I think for the time being people are getting used to monetary stability and that is allowing a big increase in market activity and growth."

He warned, however, that the stability could be fragile.

"Some kind of shock would instantly cause people to trade in their won for dollars and the exchange rate and won prices would soar," he said.

UN: 25-percent increase in Afghan children killed in 2016

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — The number of children killed in Afghanistan's conflict rose by 25 percent in 2016, according to the United Nations Mission in Afghanistan.

The 2016 Annual Report on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict in Afghanistan, released on Monday, documents an overall 3-percent rise in civilian casualties — both deaths and injuries — from the previous year.

The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) attributed the disproportionate spike in child casualties in 2016 mainly to a 66-percent increase in casualties from left-over or discarded munitions. The report states that 923 children in Afghanistan were killed in 2016, a 25-percent increase from the previous year. The number of children injured rose by about 23 percent. Overall it was the highest number of casualties among children ever recorded in a single year by UNAMA.

"Conflict-related violence exacted a heavy toll on Afghanistan in 2016, with an overall deterioration in civilian protection and the highest-total civilian casualties recorded since 2009, when UNAMA began systematic documentation of civilian casualties," the report stated.

It says that between Jan. 1 and Dec. 31, 2016, the mission documented 11,418 civilian casualties — 3,498 deaths and 7,920 wounded. That marked a 2-percent decrease in civilian deaths and a 6-percent increase in civilians wounded, amounting to an overall 3-percent increase in casualties compared to 2015.

"This appalling conflict destroys lives and tears communities apart in every corner of Afghanistan," the report quoted Tadamichi Yamamoto, United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan, as saying. "Real protection of civilians requires commitment and demonstrated concrete actions to protect civilians from harm and for parties to the conflict to ensure accountability for indiscriminate and deliberate acts of civilian harm."

Walker's Wisconsin could be a model for Trump on unions

By LAURIE KELLMAN and SCOTT BAUER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker's crackdown on collective bargaining could serve as a model for President Donald Trump's plans to overhaul the federal workforce. But any such move by the new president would risk a fight with already wary labor leaders.

Walker, the chief promoter, says he spoke last week with Vice President Mike Pence about "how they may take bits and pieces of what we did" with the union law and public workforce overhaul and "apply it

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at the national level.”

“They look at not only what we did with (the collective bargaining law) but even some of the civil service reforms, the two combined, so they can hire and fire based on merit and pay based on performance,” Walker told The Associated Press in an interview last week. A spokesman for Pence declined to comment.

Those remarks raised fresh hackles among leaders of public and private unions, many of whom endorsed Democrat Hillary Clinton and have seethed over Trump’s choice of a fast-food executive to be his secretary of labor, as well as his executive order freezing most federal salaries. To them, Wisconsin is a warning.

“President Trump and Vice President Pence should stay far away from Gov. Scott Walker,” said J. David Cox Sr., president of the American Federation of Federal Employees. Walker’s record on labor, he added, “is a bad investment, particularly if you’d like to be known as a ‘jobs president.’”

Under Walker, the state’s 2011 law barred collective bargaining over working conditions and big pay increases for most public workers. It also required them to pay more for health care and pension benefits. The measure led to massive protests and an unsuccessful attempt to recall Walker in 2012. His legacy includes a 2015 law that made Wisconsin one of at least 27 states with so-called right-to-work laws that generally prohibit businesses and unions from requiring all workers, not just union members, to pay union dues.

Republicans in Congress introduced a national version of right-to-work legislation last week that would, for the first time, allow millions of workers to opt out of union membership.

In many ways, the national political environment favors right-to-work and a crackdown on collective bargaining. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported Jan. 26 that the number of working Americans who are union members declined from 2015 to 2016 by 240,000 people. About 1 in 10 U.S. workers belonged to unions in 2016, roughly half of the percentage in 1983 — the first year comparable data was available, the agency said.

Exit polls from the 2016 election showed people living in union households supported Clinton over Trump by a 9 percentage point margin, down from margins of around 20 points for Democrats in most recent presidential votes.

And the nation’s ranks of right-to-work states are poised to increase, with Republican-controlled state governments in New Hampshire and Missouri advancing legislation.

Although right-to-work legislation has historically failed in New Hampshire, supporters see new hope with a GOP governor and legislature.

Kentucky also has a new GOP majority, and in January became the last Southern state to pass a right-to-work law.

“We don’t care if they are union jobs or nonunion jobs,” said state Rep. Jonathan Shell, the No. 2 Republican in the Kentucky House, which flipped to GOP control for the first time since 1921. “I don’t think people who are trying to put food on the table are going to care (about) that either. I think what they are worried about is making sure that they do have a job.”

But Wisconsin is a Trump favorite because it was expected to go to Clinton.

Important, too, is a Wisconsin-to-Washington power nexus that includes House Speaker Paul Ryan and Trump’s White House chief of staff, Reince Priebus. Trump held a “thank you” rally in the state at which he shared the stage with Walker, Ryan and Priebus.

“What we’re seeing today is what happened in Wisconsin six years ago,” said Paul Secunda, director of the labor and employment law program at Marquette University Law School. “With the current administration, it’s Wisconsin on a larger scale,” he said.

But Trey Kovacs, a labor policy analyst at the conservative Competitive Enterprise Institute, notes that Trump hasn’t given many details about his plans for the work force.

Labor unions and their allies aren’t stepping aside.

AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka shrugged off the idea of Trump making a Walker-style assault on the federal civil service — because, he said, even the Republican-controlled Congress won’t allow it.

“Most people understand that if he does that in a Republican administration, it can also happen in a Democratic administration,” Trumka said in an interview. “And that wouldn’t be so good, would it?”

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Bauer reported from Madison, Wisconsin. Associated Press writers Emily Swanson and Ken Thomas in Washington, Adam Beam in Lexington, Kentucky, Summer Ballentine in Jefferson City, Missouri, and Kathleen Ronayne in Concord, New Hampshire, contributed to this report.

Follow Kellman and Bauer on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/APLaurieKellman> and <http://www.twitter.com/@sbauerAP>

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Monday, Feb. 6, the 37th day of 2017. There are 328 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Feb. 6, 1952, Britain's King George VI, 56, died at Sandringham House in Norfolk, England; he was succeeded as monarch by his 25-year-old elder daughter, who became Queen Elizabeth II.

On this date:

In 1788, Massachusetts became the sixth state to ratify the U.S. Constitution.

In 1815, the state of New Jersey issued the first American railroad charter to John Stevens, who proposed a rail link between Trenton and New Brunswick. (The line, however, was never built.)

In 1899, a peace treaty between the United States and Spain was ratified by the U.S. Senate.

In 1911, Ronald Wilson Reagan, the 40th president of the United States, was born in Tampico, Illinois.

In 1922, Cardinal Archille Ratti was elected pope; he took the name Pius XI.

In 1933, the 20th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, the so-called "lame duck" amendment, was proclaimed in effect by Secretary of State Henry Stimson.

In 1943, a Los Angeles jury acquitted actor Errol Flynn of three counts of statutory rape.

In 1958, British European Airways Flight 609 crashed on takeoff from Munich, West Germany, killing 23 of the 44 people on board.

In 1973, Dixy Lee Ray was appointed by President Richard Nixon to be the first woman to head the Atomic Energy Commission.

In 1987, Wall Street Journal reporter Gerald Seib (syb) was released after being detained six days by Iran, accused of being a spy for Israel; Iran said the detention was a result of misunderstandings.

In 1992, 16 people were killed when a C-130 military transport plane crashed in Evansville, Indiana.

In 1995, the space shuttle Discovery flew to within 37 feet of the Russian space station Mir in the first rendezvous of its kind in two decades.

Ten years ago: Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki (NOO'-ree ahl-MAHL'-ih-kee) complained that a long-awaited Baghdad security operation was off to a slow start, but he also reassured Iraqis that security forces would live up to their responsibilities. Singer Frankie Laine died in San Diego at age 93.

Five years ago: The U.S. closed its embassy in Syria and Britain recalled its ambassador to Damascus in a new Western push to get President Bashar Assad to leave power and halt the murderous grind in Syria. Jeremy Lin of the Knicks scored a career-high 28 points in his first career start as New York beat the Utah Jazz 99-88.

One year ago: Seven GOP Republican hopefuls faced off three days before the New Hampshire primary; Marco Rubio, a first-term senator on the rise in the presidential race, faced a barrage of attacks while Sen. Ted Cruz, fresh off his victory in the Iowa caucuses, also came under withering criticism. A magnitude-6.4 earthquake struck Tainan, Taiwan, killing 116 people. Brett Favre, Ken Stabler, Marvin Harrison, Kevin Greene, Orlando Pace and Tony Dungy were elected to the Pro Football Hall of Fame. Carolina Panthers quarterback Cam Newton won The Associated Press NFL Most Valuable Player award in a landslide.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Rip Torn is 86. Actress Mamie Van Doren is 86. Actor Mike Farrell is 78. Former NBC News anchorman Tom Brokaw is 77. Singer Fabian is 74. Actress Gayle Hunnicutt is 74. Actor Michael

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Tucker is 73. Producer-director-writer Jim Sheridan is 68. Actor Jon Walmsley is 61. Actress Kathy Najimy is 60. Rock musician Simon Phillips (Toto) is 60. Actor-director Robert Townsend is 60. Actor Barry Miller is 59. Actress Megan Gallagher is 57. Rock singer Axl Rose (Guns N' Roses) is 55. Country singer Richie McDonald is 55. Singer Rick Astley is 51. Rock musician Tim Brown (Boo Radleys) is 48. "Good Morning America" co-host Amy Robach is 44. Actor Brandon Hammond is 33. Actress Alice Greczyn (GREH'-chihn) is 31. Rhythm and blues singer/actress Tinashe is 24.

Thought for Today: "Work is much more fun than fun." — Sir Noel Coward, British actor, dramatist and songwriter (1899-1973).