

Groton Daily Independent

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Saturday, Feb. 25

Region DI Tourney in Groton
Robotics at Mitchell Technical Institute
Show Choir at Vermillion
State Wrestling Tourney in Sioux Falls

Sunday, Feb. 26

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship/Milestones at 9 a.m., Sunday School at 10 a.m.

Catholic Parish: Mass at St. Elizabeth Ann Seaton Catholic Church at 9 a.m., then at St. Joseph in Turton at 11 a.m.

United Methodist Parish: Worship in Conde at 9 a.m., coffee fellowship time at 10 a.m. and worship in Groton at 11 a.m.

Heaven Bound Ministries in Pierpont: Worship at 10 a.m.

Open Gym for JH-8 from 2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., and for grades 6-12 from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Kayla Schuring Bridal shower

Feb. 25.

Open House 1-3 p.m.

St Elizabeth Ann Seaton Catholic Church, Groton
Please bring a recipe to share with the bride to be

Help Wanted

Office Manager, Dakota Brush, call Topper
605 397 7337

Apts for Rent

1 bedroom apartment for rent. Move in by Feb. 28th and get a FREE 32" Flat Screen TV! All utilities included except A/C, for \$600. 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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PARTS COUNTER SALES

Self motivated individual needed to fill our Parts Counter Sales position. Duties include parts sales, display stocking, shipping and receiving. Sponsored training, excellent benefits package and the possibility for advancement. Contact Steve at 605-395-6421 or email resume to s.harry@harrysinc.com.

Harry Implement Inc.

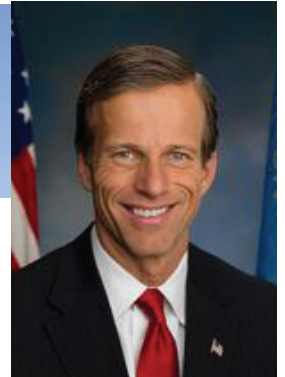
PO Box 841
Ferne, SD
57439



Kristi Peterson Bookkeeping

Simple Solutions for YOU
605/216-4474 ~ peterson4@nvc.net

John Thune
U.S. SENATOR - SOUTH DAKOTA



An Agenda Built on Growth and Strength

Although President Trump has been in office for more than 30 days now, many of his Cabinet nominees are still waiting for a simple up-or-down vote in the U.S. Senate. These delays have little to do with the nominees' qualifications and everything to do with Senate Democrats' failure to accept the results of the 2016 election.

To put this historic level of obstruction into perspective, the confirmation process for President Trump's nominees is the slowest since George Washington was president – you know, when people had to travel by horse and buggy.

Since the 1950s, most (if not all) Cabinet nominees for incoming presidents had been confirmed by this point in their presidencies. From 1881 to 1933 when Franklin Roosevelt became president, every single Cabinet nominee was confirmed on the first day of a new administration. When Senate Republicans were in the minority and President Obama came into office, we didn't stall the confirmation process. While we disagreed politically, we knew how important it was for the new government to get up and running as quickly as possible.

Despite this obstruction, the Senate has already made progress on our commitment to repeal and replace Obamacare. Earlier this year, we passed an Obamacare repeal resolution that gives Congress the tools it needs to dismantle this failed law and replace it with reforms that drive down costs and increase access to quality care. After significant delays, the Senate approved Dr. Tom Price to lead the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. He will play an integral role in our effort to reform our health care system so it works more efficiently for the American people.

Our 2017 agenda also includes reforming our outdated tax code for the first time in 30 years. In today's global economy, a simpler and fairer tax code would give U.S. businesses a more competitive edge. It would also help strengthen our economy – get us back to growth rates of 3 percent or higher. A strong, healthy economy leads to more good-paying jobs, which is exactly what we need.

Also this year, we'll confirm Judge Neil Gorsuch to serve on the Supreme Court. There's no shortage of ways to describe Judge Gorsuch: mainstream, well-qualified, universally respected, just to name a few. By the time his nomination comes before the Senate, I hope cooler heads will have prevailed and Democrats will give him an up-or-down vote – the same courtesy Republicans gave to President Obama's first-term Supreme Court nominees.

While I understand my colleagues' disappointment with having lost the election (I've been in their shoes, too), this is what happens in a democracy. But there are no winners when progress is held hostage purely out of spite and anger. Whether or not Democrats change their approach and work with, rather than against Republicans – and I hope they will – I'm not going to let that get in the way of delivering for South Dakota.

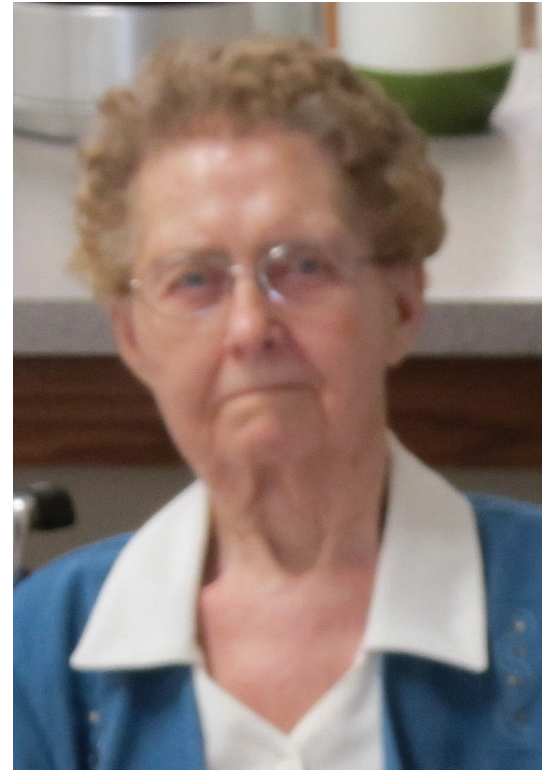
The Life of Mary Louisa Brown

Services for Mary Louisa Brown, 94, of Conde will be 11 a.m., Tuesday, February 28 at Paetznick-Garness Funeral Chapel, Groton. The Rev. Harold Salem will officiate. Burial will follow in Sunset Memorial Gardens, Aberdeen.

Visitation will be held at the chapel for one hour prior to services on Tuesday.

Mary Louisa passed away February 21, 2017 at Groton Care and Rehabilitation Center.

Mary Louisa was born on September 4, 1922 in Rauville to Arthur Conrad and Frances Edna (Lawrence) Jensen. She grew up in Rauville and the shadows of the Fort Sisseton Hills, where her grandparents resided. Her father managed the grain elevator in Rauville for many years before taking a position with the Elevator in Randolph. Mary Louisa attended country school and graduated from Conde High School in May of 1940. She was united in marriage with Allen Brown on May 25, 1940. The couple made their home in the Conde area and were blessed with one son, Gene. Following her husband's passing in 1990, Mary Louisa remained on the farm by rural Conde until the age of 89. After several years at Rosewood Court, she became a resident of Groton Care and Rehabilitation Center.



Mary Louisa was a member of the First Baptist Church in Aberdeen. She was an Eastern Star Member for 73 years and also belonged to the Circle Club in Conde. She was active in the Hub City SAMS Club and was honored as a 65 year member of the South Dakota Community and Family Extension Leaders.

Celebrating her life are her grandchildren; Teri (Rob) Heggernes of Mora, MN, Jerry (Laura) Brown of Conde, Kari (Darwin) Tetnowski of Mora, MN, four great-grandsons, Jacob Tetnowski, Zachary Tetnowski, Joshua Heggernes, Lane Brown and several nieces and nephews.

Preceding her in death were her parents, her husband, Allen and son, Gene.

Honorary Casketbearers will be Zachary Tetnowski, Joshua Heggernes and Lane Brown.

Casketbearers will be Rob Heggernes, Darwin Tetnowski, Jacob Tetnowski, Roger Clemensen, Randy Stoltenberg and Jerry Brown.

Laura Edwards Named SDSU Extension State Climatologist

BROOKINGS, S.D. - A tornado which nearly hit her family's Twin Cities home, left its mark on nine-year-old Laura Edwards and fueled an interest in weather and climate which has not subsided.

Since 2011, Edwards has served South Dakotans as the SDSU Extension Climate Field Specialist. She was recently named the new SDSU Extension State Climatologist, a position previously held by Dennis Todaye.

"Laura is well equipped for this new role," said Alvaro Garcia, SDSU Extension Agriculture and Natural Resources Program Director & Professor. "The weather impacts so many aspects of our lives. For several years now, South Dakotans have come to rely on Laura's climate insights and interpretation to better understand how current climate trends and predictions may impact their crops, livestock and other aspects of their lives."

In addition to evaluating climate and providing information on its impact on South Dakotans lives and livelihoods, as the SDSU Extension State Climatologist, Edwards will also interface with federal, state, and tribal agencies to develop strategies to help communities prepare for the impacts of climate extremes and disasters.

"With agriculture as our state's number one industry, climate definitely has an impact on our economy," Edwards said. "I hope the information I provide helps producers and communities to be better prepared and gives them time to consider climate in developing plans for managing their farms and ranches."

In her new role, Edwards plans to develop more user-friendly tools crop and livestock producers can use when making management decisions based on weather and climate.

More about Laura Edwards

Following the tornado which hit Edwards' community, a meteorologist visited her fourth-grade classroom. "I was hooked and became a climate nerd after that," she says of the infatuation with the weather which led her to write the American Meteorological Society asking them what she needed to do to become a meteorologist. "Science impacts everyone - we just need to make that connection with citizens and youth. The impact this classroom visit had on me and my future career is one of many reasons why I am a firm believer in outreach and the mission of SDSU Extension."

They replied to Edwards with a letter that included a list of colleges which offered Meteorology degrees.

Edwards received degrees in Physics and French from the University of Minnesota, and in 2003 she received a master's in Meteorology from the University of Maryland.

Prior to joining the SDSU Extension team in 2011, Edwards worked as an Assistant Research Climatologist for the Western Regional Climate Center at the Desert Research Institute in Reno, Nevada; served as an Instructor at the University of Nevada and worked as the Assistant State Climatologist in the Department of Meteorology at the University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland.



Courtesy of iGrow.org

Since 2011, Laura Edwards has served South Dakotans as the SDSU Extension Climate Field Specialist. She was recently named the new SDSU Extension State Climatologist.

KRISTI NOEM
REPRESENTATIVE FROM SOUTH DAKOTA



Securing the Blessings of Liberty

There is no role more directly within the federal government's jurisdiction than ensuring our nation's security. Our Constitution was written to assure that: "We the People ... in Order to ... insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence ... and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution..."

Today, radical Islamic terrorists seek to pose an existential threat to our democracy and the Blessings of Liberty we celebrate. ISIL, al-Qaeda, Boko Haram and others have sought to expand their physical boundaries and the reach of their violent ideology. These groups are convicted to destroy both our people and our values in the most gruesome and brutal manner possible.

President Dwight D. Eisenhower "kept the peace by using our own strength" – a sentiment shared by President Ronald Reagan, whose foreign policy was summed up with the familiar phrase: "Peace through strength." I believe the same approach is needed today.

The United States has the world's most powerful and skilled military. Our men and women in uniform are second to none. But President Obama whittled away at our military and too often muddled its mission, even claiming that climate change could pose a graver threat to our national security than terrorism. Military equipment must be upgraded. Training and new technologies must be invested in. Our readiness must be improved, not only to prepare for a major crisis, but to let our enemies know we're ready to respond to a major crisis.

In his 1983 State of the Union address, President Reagan explained: "Our strategy for peace with freedom must be based on strength – economic strength and military strength." America's economy has endured serious blows throughout the last decade. Jobs have been shipped overseas. Taxes and regulations have made it difficult to start a business – let alone, expand one. We have to get our economy going again, something I'm eager to work with President Trump to accomplish.

At the same time, it's necessary we weaken the economic backing of terror groups. One of the worst outcomes of President Obama's deal with Iran was that it flooded Iran with cash. Iran, one of the world's largest state sponsors of terrorism, received almost immediate sanctions relief, producing an economic impact of as much as \$150 billion. I'm optimistic we'll be able to work with the Trump administration to cut off terrorism's economic engines.

Additionally, we have a constitutional responsibility to "insure domestic Tranquility." Too much blood has been shed by terrorists on American soil. Still, our border remains porous and our immigration policies inadequate. I have participated in classified briefings on this subject. I've visited countries, like Greece and Egypt, which sit on the front lines of the refugee crisis. I can tell you definitively: our current vetting processes are inadequate.

We often rely on government-to-government relationships to conduct immigration vetting, but in countries like Syria where the government has collapsed, it's nearly impossible to verify that someone is who they say they are. This is why I support putting a temporary pause on accepting refugees and other immigrants from terrorist-held areas until the administration can certify those coming into our country do not present a threat. I've also backed legislation empowering state governors to deny refugee resettlements in their states.

My number one priority is the safety and security of the American people. That's what our Constitution requires of me and what ultimately will secure the Blessings of Liberty for ourselves and our Posterity.



Advancing Regulatory Reform Through EPW Subcommittee

For the past two years, I had the opportunity to chair a subcommittee in the Environment and Public Works (EPW) Committee focusing on regulatory oversight, providing much-needed reviews of the regulatory processes at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Army Corps, and other agencies. It was recently announced that I will have the opportunity to again be the chairman of the Subcommittee on Superfund, Waste Management and Regulatory Oversight during this next session of Congress. I'm looking forward to building upon the work we have done to advance meaningful regulatory reform that will benefit our economy while simultaneously preserving our natural resources.

Our subcommittee is tasked with overseeing the rulemaking processes at agencies like the EPA and Army Corps. We will continue to hold hearings, as we did during the past two years, to make sure these agencies are using sound science and taking into account economic, state, and local concerns when issuing any new regulations. Under the Obama administration, we too often saw regulatory agencies fail to adequately consult with local units of government and other stakeholders before issuing regulations that directly impact their livelihoods. We will also continue to oversee the Army Corps' management of the Missouri River and work with them to avoid another devastating flood event like the flood of 2011. We held a field hearing on the 2011 flood during the last Congress where it was revealed that there is room for improvement within the Army Corps to make certain they manage the Missouri River in an appropriate and responsible manner.

At a subcommittee field hearing during the last Congress, we heard from South Dakotans about the negative impact of one of these rules, the Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS) rule, which would give the EPA unprecedented authority over significant water bodies that it currently does not have jurisdiction over. The rule would create new barriers for not just the ag community but landowners and local leaders who simply want to keep weeds from growing along our roads and ditches. Yet, our committee found that EPA continuously ignored the concerns of farmers, ranchers, agriculture groups, state governors, attorneys general and the Small Business Administration before moving ahead with the WOTUS rule. Despite these concerns and a nationwide court stay against the rule, the previous administration also illegally worked to implement it.

Fortunately, President Trump's newly-confirmed EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt intends to turn a new page at the EPA. Administrator Pruitt is committed to working diligently to restore order at the agency, promising to consult with state and local leaders when making decisions, using only the most current, sound science and – importantly – working with Congress before making any sweeping regulatory changes. This is a breath of fresh air for many farmers, ranchers, local leaders and landowners across the state.

The success of the U.S. economy and the creation of American jobs depends on Congress making a concerted effort to take back their authority and reign in the rulemaking process, and the EPW oversight subcommittee is ready to take on that task. We will continue to conduct a thorough review of the regulatory process at the EPA, Army Corps, and other agencies. And when we see areas that need fixing, we will work with them to find solutions that take both our economy and the environment into consideration.

We all want clean air and water, and I believe we can achieve that without imposing excessive regulations on the American people. I look forward to working with EPW Chairman John Barrasso (R-Wyo.), other members of my subcommittee and the new administration to explore further ways to hold regulatory agencies accountable to the public.

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Today in Weather History

February 25, 1987: Six to thirty inches of snow fell on this date in 1987 across much of western and central South Dakota. Three to six inches of snow fell in the northeast part of South Dakota. Some of the largest snowfall amounts reported were 30 inches at Phillip, 26 inches at Murdo and Timber Lake, with 15 inches at Rapid City. Numerous accidents occurred in the western and central sections of the state. Many roads were closed including interstate 90 for most of the 27th. Slippery roads were a major factor in the vehicle injuries of three women on Highway 12, six and one-half miles east of Ipswich in the late afternoon of the 27th. The storm began on the 24th and lasted into the 28th.

February 25, 2000: Unusual February severe thunderstorms produced nickel to quarter size hail in Lyman and Hand counties on this date in 2000.

1922 - The temperature at Los Angeles, CA, soared to 92 degrees to establish a record for the month of February. (David Ludlum)

1977 - Dust reduced visibilities from eastern Virginia through the southeastern states to Florida between the 24th and the 28th. The dust originated in the western Great Plains on the 22nd and 23rd, with wind gusts above 100 mph reported at Guadalupe Pass TX, at White Sands NM, in Sherman County KS, and in eastern Colorado. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Low pressure in Nevada produced snow from the southwestern U.S. to the Dakotas. Snowfall totals in Arizona ranged up to 82 inches at Alpine. Flagstaff AZ reported 23 inches of snow in 24 hours. Other heavier snowfall totals included 20 inches at Daggett NV, 24 inches at Brian Head UT, 24 inches at Red Lodge MT, and 26 inches at Angel Fire NM. Snow at Los Alamos NM pushed their snowfall total for the winter past their previous record of 123.5 inches. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Overnight snow squalls in the Lower Great Lakes Region buried Pulaski NY under 17 inches of snow. Sunny and mild weather prevailed across the rest of the nation. Havre MT reported a record high of 66 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Thirteen cities in Florida reported record low temperatures for the date, including Jacksonville with a reading of 24 degrees. Severe cold in Florida claimed three lives, and resulted in 250 to 300 million

dollars crop damage. Unseasonably warm weather prevailed in the central U.S. Dodge City KS reported record high of 80 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)




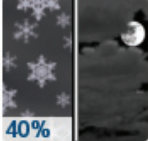





livestream

**Upcoming Events
Tuesday, BBB Region**

gdilive.com

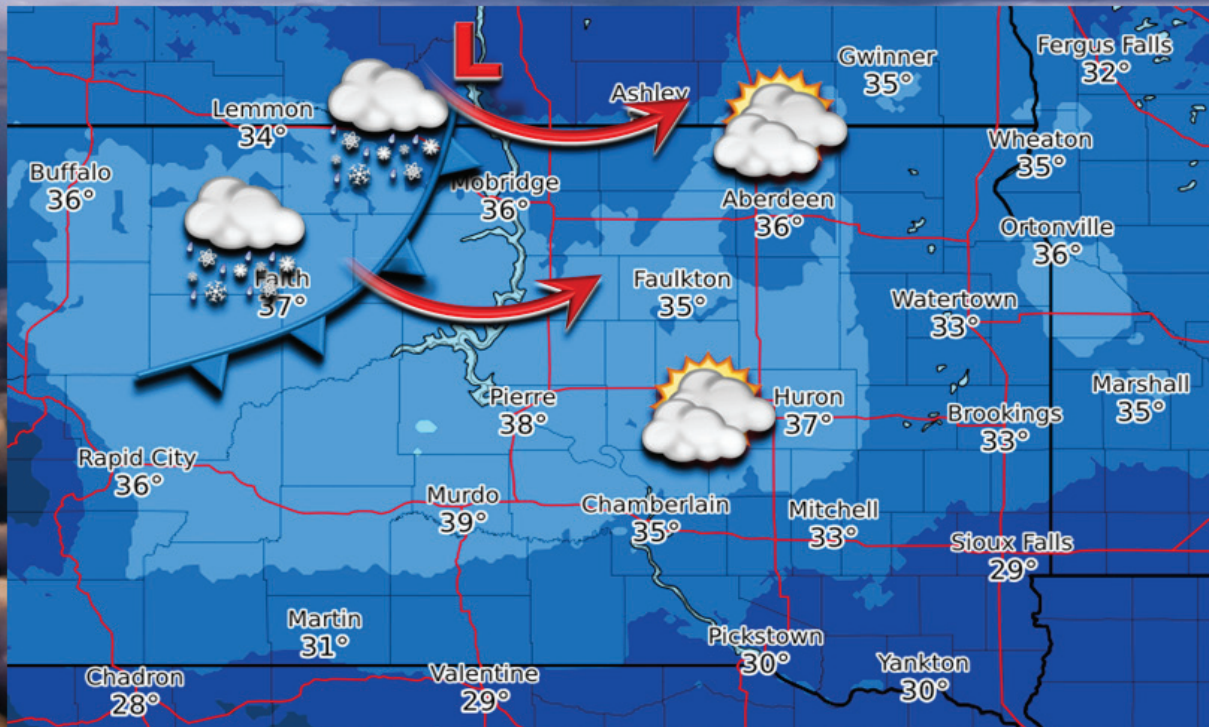
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Today	Tonight	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday	Monday Night	Tuesday
						
30%	40%					20%
Partly Sunny then Chance Rain/Snow	Chance Snow Showers then Mostly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy	Partly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy	Slight Chance Snow
High: 37 °F	Low: 20 °F	High: 34 °F	Low: 19 °F	High: 40 °F	Low: 20 °F	High: 33 °F

Mostly Sunny – Scattered PM Showers

Saturday Highs



weather.gov/Aberdeen



National Weather Service Aberdeen



@NWSAberdeen

Updated: 2/25/2017 5:26 AM Central

Published on: 02/25/2017 at 5:30AM

High pressure departing the area will result in a mix of sun and clouds. A weak clipper will move across the area this afternoon and overnight. This feature will generate rain and snow showers across north central South Dakota and then snow showers along and east of the James valley. Accumulations will be light however, probably less than a half inch. Dry conditions are expected Sunday with highs near 40.

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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 28.3 F at 2:42 PM
Low Outside Temp: 17.5 F at 11:57 PM
High Gust: 31.0 Mph at 2:48 AM
Rain: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 70° in 1958
Record Low: -29 in 1919
Average High: 31°F
Average Low: 12°F
Average Precip in Feb.: 0.47
Precip to date in Jan.: 0.00
Average Precip to date: 0.94
Precip Year to Date: 0.00
Sunset Tonight: 6:15 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:16 a.m.



Weather Forecast for Sat, Feb 25, 2017, issued 4:52 AM EST
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by McReynolds based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts



ANGER IN ACTION

A college professor was having a difficult time getting his students to do their required assignments. As the class was about to end he said emphatically, "When you come to class tomorrow, it would be wise to have your assignment completed and ready for my review."

The next day when class began he said in a loud, threatening voice, "Hold up your papers with your right hand!" All of the students complied with his demand except one. He held up his paper with his left hand.

Incensed, the professor shouted, "Right hand stupid, not your left hand. Don't you know the difference?"

"Yes, sir, I do sir," said the student. "But I lost my right hand in combat."

The Greeks had a special phrase for anger. They called it "a brief madness." It seems appropriate. When we become angry we lose control of ourselves and we often say things that are hurtful and harmful.

David the Psalmist was wise when he wrote, "Stop your anger! Turn from your rage....it only leads to harm."

Anger and rage are destructive emotions that reveal a desire to dominate and control others. That is God's responsibility. Ours is to concentrate on God and His grace and find peace as we trust Him to control us.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help us to turn our anger into affection and our frustration into faith – knowing that You will turn our trials into triumphs. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 37:8 Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; D

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News from the Associated Press

Friday's Scores By The Associated Press

BOYS' BASKETBALL

Aberdeen Christian 71, Northwestern 57
Aberdeen Roncalli 75, Mobridge-Pollock 57
Baltic 58, McCook Central/Montrose 44
Chamberlain 77, McLaughlin 52
Clark/Willow Lake 66, Arlington 30
DeSmet 53, Hamlin 52
Faith 74, Wall 42
Florence/Henry 71, Estelline 41
Hankinson, N.D. 80, Wilmot 78
Harding County 68, Bison 54, OT
Highmore-Harrold 76, Miller 75
Hitchcock-Tulare 71, Sunshine Bible Academy 37
Hot Springs 77, Edgemont 20
Langford 55, Waverly-South Shore 44
Lemmon 91, Wakpala 33
Leola/Frederick 52, Ipswich 43
Philip 56, Kadoka Area 51
Potter County 62, Britton-Hecla 52
Rapid City Christian 73, Dupree 43
Sanborn Central/Woonsocket 64, Wessington Springs 16
Sully Buttes 68, Eureka/Bowdle 26
Timber Lake 79, Tiospaye Topa 47
Tri-Valley 65, Sioux Falls Christian 62
White River 67, Lyman 44

GIRLS' BASKETBALL

Region 5A
Regional Semifinal
McCook Central/Montrose 52, Parkston 35
Region 8A
Region Qualifier
Belle Fourche 53, Custer 42
St. Thomas More 54, Hill City 28
District 7B
Championship
Oldham-Ramona/Rutland 73, Chester 66, 2OT
District 11B
Championship
Tripp-Delmont/Armour 54, Platte-Geddes 42
District 12B
Championship
Avon 53, Burke/South Central 43
POSTPONEMENTS AND CANCELLATIONS
District 9B

Championship
Freeman vs. Parker, ppd. to Feb 25.
District 10B
Championship
Gayville-Volin vs. Irene-Wakonda, ppd. to Feb 25.

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) _ These South Dakota lotteries were drawn Friday:

Mega Millions

12-29-33-42-68, Mega Ball: 14, Megaplier: 3

(twelve, twenty-nine, thirty-three, forty-two, sixty-eight; Mega Ball: fourteen; Megaplier: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$64 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$40 million

Winning numbers drawn in 'Mega Millions' game

By The Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) _ The winning numbers in Friday evening's drawing of the "Mega Millions" game were:

12-29-33-42-68, Mega Ball: 14, Megaplier: 3

(twelve, twenty-nine, thirty-three, forty-two, sixty-eight; Mega Ball: fourteen; Megaplier: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$64 million

Hill City man sentenced to 10 years in girlfriend's death

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A Hill City man who pleaded guilty to assaulting his girlfriend, who later died, has been sentenced to 10 years in prison.

Courtney Millhouse, 42, was sentenced Tuesday, the Rapid City Journal (<http://bit.ly/2kUpbaD>) reported.

In September, Millhouse was charged with manslaughter in the death of Stacy Childers, 42. Under a plea bargain, Millhouse pleaded guilty to aggravated assault but admitted no responsibility for the crime.

"Stacy was my life," Millhouse said. "I always did the best I could for her."

Defense lawyer Eric Whitcher said the cause of Childers's fatal head injury remains in dispute, which prompted Pennington County State's Attorney's Office to negotiate a plea.

Whitcher argues Childers died with a head injury from a 2015 vehicular accident.

Deputy State's Attorney Wayne Venhuizen alleged that the victim's head injury developed after Millhouse had pushed her against the front passenger window of a vehicle during a dispute in August.

Venhuizen said a friend of the defendant testified under oath that Millhouse had admitted doing so.

Millhouse hasn't confirmed the dispute.

Stephen Hagen, Childers' stepfather, told the Rapid City Journal that his family agreed to a plea deal because they didn't want to risk Millhouse being acquitted at trial.

"We didn't want him to walk away with nothing," he said.

Information from: Rapid City Journal, <http://www.rapidcityjournal.com>

6 face charges in Sioux Falls crash that killed teenager

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Six people face charges in connection with a Sioux Falls crash that killed a 15-year-old.

Those facing charges include the parents of one teenager who are accused of trying to cover up the crime.

Fifteen-year-old Kareem Cisse died Wednesday when the sedan he was riding in was forced off the road

by a truck after an apparent drug deal went wrong. Police say after the sedan's driver grabbed marijuana and sped away, the truck chased the sedan at speeds reaching 80 mph before the car hit a tree.

The 16-year-old who was driving the truck has been charged with second-degree murder and manslaughter. His parents are accused of evidence tampering and lying to police, the Argus Leader reports (<http://argusne.ws/2mgo45n>).

Three other people, including the sedan's driver, also face charges.

Information from: Argus Leader, <http://www.argusleader.com>

Pipeline protest camp cleared, but area far from normal

By **BLAKE NICHOLSON** and **JAMES MacPHERSON**, Associated Press

CANNON BALL, N.D. (AP) — Authorities this week cleared the last holdouts from a large Dakota Access pipeline protest camp on federal land in North Dakota, but it will be a while before the region returns to normal.

There's tons of debris to be cleared. A main highway bridge remains closed. Hundreds of protesters are still in the area. The pipeline operator is rushing to complete construction and says oil could flow within 10 days. Looming over it all is a still-unresolved court battle.

"This was beautiful North Dakota prairie in a sensitive watershed area," Gov. Doug Burgum said of the square-mile protest camp at the confluence of the Missouri and Cannonball rivers. "It's only use prior to this was for cattle grazing."

But since August, it was home to hundreds and at times thousands of people who support the claims of Sioux nations that the \$3.8 billion pipeline to move North Dakota oil through South Dakota and Iowa to Illinois threatens drinking water, sacred sites and tribal religious practices. Texas-based pipeline developer Energy Transfer Partners disputes that.

The Army Corps of Engineers ordered the Oceti Sakowin camp closed Wednesday in advance of spring flooding. About 200 protesters left peacefully, with another 56 being arrested over two days for defying the order to leave. Federal Bureau of Indian Affairs officers at the same time cleared the much smaller Rosebud camp just to the south, on the Standing Rock Indian Reservation.

Many who left those camps planned to go to one of three nearby camps, all of which are on the reservation.

"They can get us out of Oceti, but they can't stop what we started here," protester Kate Silvertooth, of Loveland, Colorado, said Friday while shopping at a convenience store near the reservation town of Cannon Ball.

The status of the remaining protest camps is uncertain.

The longstanding Sacred Stone Camp has swelled to about 550 people with the influx of about 150 people this week, according to Joye Braun, a protest leader. But whether that camp and another known as Seventh Generation Rising are on private land or tribal land is in dispute. Protesters haven't been able to get into another camp established on private land by the Cheyenne River Sioux because of an Indian affairs bureau roadblock. The Standing Rock Tribal Council also has made it clear it wants all of the camps to shut down.

"We are working with the tribe and the Bureau of Indian Affairs" on an agreement to resolve the situation, Braun said.

Oil could be flowing through the pipeline as soon as March 6, according to William Scherman, an attorney for the pipeline operator.

The company has finished drilling the main hole under Lake Oahe and will soon be laying pipe under the Missouri River reservoir — the last stretch of the 1,200-mile pipeline.

The company got permission for the lake work last month from the pro-energy Trump administration, but American Indian tribes continue fighting in court. The Standing Rock and Cheyenne River tribes have asked U.S. District Judge James Boasberg to overturn permission for the river crossing. Several groups including the National Congress of American Indians along with 34 other tribes on Thursday filed a court

brief supporting the request.

Boasberg has scheduled a hearing Tuesday on a request from the Cheyenne River tribes to issue an injunction stopping the pipeline work.

Meanwhile, workers are racing against time to clean up hundreds of tons of debris at the camp before spring melt floodwaters wash it into the rivers. Trash and structures need to be cleared, some garbage will have to be dug up, and soil contamination from such things as fuel and human waste might also need to be removed.

"This isn't just high school kids picking up garbage in a ditch along the road," Burgum said.

The cleanup could cost federal taxpayers as much as \$1.2 million, according to Corps Col. John Henderson. Crews hope to complete the work in about a month.

There's no set date for the reopening of a bridge on a main state highway outside the closed camp. The bridge has been closed since fires were set there in late October. It's being reopened in stages, with emergency vehicles currently the only ones allowed through.

Nicholson reported from Bismarck, North Dakota. Follow him on Twitter at: <http://twitter.com/NicholsonBlake>

House committee advances ban on powdered alcohol sales

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A state House panel wants to ban powdered alcohol in South Dakota.

The Commerce and Energy Committee voted 10-3 Friday to send the bill to the chamber's floor. It has passed through the Senate.

Republican Sen. Jack Kolbeck, the bill's main sponsor, says lawmakers need to be proactive so that powdered alcohol doesn't become available in South Dakota. GOP Rep. Lana Greenfield says it makes sense to "head it off at the pass."

Lawmakers worry that age restrictions on buying alcohol wouldn't apply to the powdered product if it were available and could be sold to minors.

The bill would outlaw the sale, manufacture or possession of powdered alcohol with some exceptions. The National Conference of State Legislatures says at least 25 states had banned its sale as of 2015.

Fatal snowmobile accident on Ramsey County lake

DEVILS LAKE, N.D. (AP) — Authorities in Ramsey County have identified the snowmobiler who died when hitting open water on Devils Lake.

KZZY reports the Ramsey County Sheriff's Office says 59-year-old Lennis Sauvage of Aberdeen, South Dakota was crossing from one part of the lake to another and hit some open water under a bridge Thursday.

A friend who was ice fishing with Sauvage was behind him on another snowmobile and called 911.

The Lake Region Search and Rescue team responded, but were unable to revive him.

Information from: KZZY-FM, <http://lrradioworks.com>

South Dakota 'gold card' pistol permit gets federal approval

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A new South Dakota concealed pistol permit that supporters say will speed up gun shopping for permit holders has received federal approval.

South Dakota officials said Friday that the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives has determined that "gold card" and enhanced concealed pistol permits issued starting in January qualify as alternatives to the background check requirement for gun purchases.

The gold card allows customers to bypass a background check for each firearm purchase from a licensed dealer. Instead, shoppers can simply present the permit, which requires completing an FBI fingerprint background check on top of the standard obligations necessary to get a concealed carry permit.

Minnehaha County Sheriff Mike Milstead tells the Argus Leader that his office will start processing gold

card applications Friday.

South Dakota's balanced attack tops Western Illinois 92-81

MACOMB, Ill. (AP) — Trey Dickerson scored 21 points, Tyler Flack and Matt Mooney each scored 16 points, and South Dakota pulled away from Western Illinois in the second half for a 92-81 win on Thursday night.

The Coyotes led 44-41 at halftime and kept a slim lead early in the second half. Mike Miklusak had a layup and the Leathernecks trailed 52-48. But Flack threw down a dunk, Dickerson added a pair of free throws and Mooney buried a 3 and South Dakota (20-10, 11-4 Summit League) led 61-50.

Triston Simpson added a layup, Carlton Hurst made two free throws and the Coyotes weren't threatened the rest of the way. Trey Burch-Manning added 10 points and 14 rebounds for the Coyotes, which had a 42-33 edge on the glass.

Miklusak led Western Illinois (8-18, 5-10) with 24 points and 13 rebounds, Garret Covington had 21 points and Brandon Gilbeck added 15 points. Miklusak and Covington each hit five 3-pointers.

House approves bill to allow concealed carry without permit

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — The state House approved a bill Thursday that would allow people who can legally carry a concealed handgun in South Dakota to do so without a permit.

South Dakota representatives voted 37-30 to send the bill to the Senate. It's currently a misdemeanor for someone to carry a concealed pistol or to have one concealed in a vehicle without a permit.

Republican Rep. Lynne DiSanto, the main sponsor, said her measure is about freedom, adding that requiring a permit only penalizes legal and rightful gun owners.

"The bad guy is going to have a gun no matter what," House Majority Leader Lee Qualm said. "He could give a rip about the rules."

A constitutional carry bill passed through the House in 2015, but died in a Senate committee. GOP Gov. Dennis Daugaard has threatened to veto this year's legislation if approved, praising South Dakota's gun laws as reasonable.

The governor's opposition means trouble for the proposal, which didn't receive the two-thirds support required for a potential veto override. The Senate was considering a similar bill, but voted to table it.

At the end of December, there were roughly 96,000 active regular and enhanced permits issued in South Dakota, according to the Secretary of State's office.

House members want disclosure of top advocacy group donors

By JAMES NORD, Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Some nonprofit advocacy groups that contribute to South Dakota ballot measure campaigns should be required to disclose their top donors, state House lawmakers voted Thursday.

The chamber voted 42-25 to send the bill to the Senate. It would require the disclosure of the 50 largest contributors to nonprofit groups, including labor organizations, business leagues and social welfare organizations, that give \$25,000 or more in a year to a South Dakota ballot measure committee.

House Speaker Mark Mickelson, the bill's main sponsor, said the quality of an idea and how much importance to place on the message has a lot to do with who is saying it. Republican Gov. Dennis Daugaard supports the measure, which comes after an election season with 10 ballot questions that brought millions of dollars from out-of-state groups pouring into South Dakota campaigns.

"There is no prohibition. There is no chilling of free speech," Mickelson said of the bill. "It says, 'Would you mind giving the recipients of your message a little bit of an idea of who you are so that we can help understand how closely allied your interests are with ours?'"

The measure would also impose the requirement on advocacy groups that spend over \$25,000 on independent expenditures within a year. But the bill's disclosure provisions wouldn't apply to 501(c)(3) charities, for-profit businesses and contributors who give less than \$5,000.

Opponents argue that South Dakota residents have the right to support causes they believe in without

fear of harassment and that the bill is an infringement on the First Amendment.

Dale Bartscher of the conservative group Family Heritage Alliance Action said during a committee hearing that the bill should be defeated because free speech is a right of every American.

"Donors to organizations, regardless of their views on public policy matters, should be free to support causes they believe in without the fear of retaliation, harassment or intimidation by some powerful government figures," Bartscher said.

Malaysia warns North Korea to cooperate with investigation

By EILEEN NG, Associated Press

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP) — Malaysian police said Saturday that they would issue an arrest warrant for a North Korean diplomat if he refuses to cooperate with the investigation into the deadly attack on North Korean ruler Kim Jong Un's exiled half brother.

The investigation has unleashed a serious diplomatic fight between Malaysia and North Korea, a prime suspect in the Feb. 13 killing of Kim Jong Nam at Kuala Lumpur's airport. Friday's revelation by Malaysian police that the banned chemical weapon VX nerve agent was used to kill Kim raised the stakes significantly in a case that has broad geopolitical implications.

Police said Saturday that they would conduct a sweep of the airport terminal where Kim was killed to check for possible traces of VX.

Experts say the nerve agent used in the attack was almost certainly produced in a sophisticated state weapons laboratory and is banned under an international treaty. But North Korea never signed that treaty, and has spent decades developing a complex chemical weapons program.

Kim was not an obvious political threat to his estranged half brother, Kim Jong Un. But he may have been seen as a potential rival in North Korea's dynastic dictatorship, even though he had lived in exile for years. North Korea has denied any role in the attack.

Malaysia said earlier in the week that Hyon Kwang Song, a second secretary at the North Korean Embassy in Kuala Lumpur, was wanted for questioning. But authorities acknowledged at the time that he has diplomatic immunity and that they couldn't compel him to appear.

On Saturday, Malaysia's tone changed.

Abdul Samah Mat, the police chief leading the investigation, said authorities would give the diplomat "reasonable" time to come forward. If he doesn't, he said, police will issue a notice compelling him to do so.

"And if he failed to turn up ... then we will go to the next step by getting a warrant of arrest from the court," Abdul Samah told reporters.

Lawyer Sankara Nair, however, noted that diplomats have immunity privileges even in criminal cases.

"If he is a Korean diplomat with a diplomatic passport, then he has immunity no matter a criminal case or otherwise," he said. "Police can apply for a warrant, but it can easily be set aside by the embassy."

Malaysia hasn't directly accused the North Korean government of being behind the attack, but officials have said four North Korean men provided two women with poison to carry it out.

The four men fled Malaysia shortly after the killing, while the women — one from Indonesia and the other Vietnamese — were arrested.

On Saturday, the Indonesian suspect, Siti Aisyah, met with her country's deputy ambassador to Malaysia, saying she had been paid the equivalent of \$90 for what she believed was a harmless prank.

Aisyah, 25, said she had been introduced to people who looked like Japanese or Koreans who asked her to play a prank for a reality show, Deputy Ambassador Andriano Erwin said.

Asked about whether she knew what was on her hands at the time of the attack, Erwin said: "She didn't tell us about that. She only said that it's a kind of oil, baby oil, something like that."

The Vietnamese woman who was arrested, Doan Thi Huong, also thought she was taking part in a prank, Vietnam's foreign ministry said Saturday, after a representative from the Vietnamese Embassy in Malaysia met with Huong.

An odorless chemical with the consistency of motor oil, VX is an extremely powerful poison, with an

amount no larger than a few grains of salt enough to kill. It can be inhaled, swallowed or absorbed through the skin. Then, in anywhere from a few seconds to a few hours, it can cause a range of symptoms, from blurred vision to a headache. Enough exposure leads to convulsions, paralysis, respiratory failure and death.

The killing of Kim Jong Nam took place amid crowds of travelers at Kuala Lumpur's airport and appeared to be a well-planned hit. Kim died on the way to a hospital, within hours of the attack.

In grainy surveillance footage, the women appear to smear something onto Kim's face before walking away in separate directions. Malaysian police said the attackers had been trained to go immediately to the bathroom and clean their hands.

Aisyah has said previously that she was duped into the attack, but Malaysian police say the suspects knew what they were doing. Experts say the women must have taken precautions so the nerve agent wouldn't kill them.

An antidote, atropine, can be injected after exposure and is carried by medics in war zones where weapons of mass destruction are suspected.

Tens of thousands of passengers have passed through Kuala Lumpur's airport since the apparent assassination was carried out. No areas were cordoned off and protective measures were not taken.

Late Saturday, however, police said they would begin a sweep of the budget terminal where Kim was attacked to check for traces of VX.

The sweep was scheduled to start at 1 a.m. Sunday and was to involve officers from the police's chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear teams, as well as the fire department's hazardous materials unit and the government's atomic energy board. Although VX is not radioactive, police said the radiological team and the atomic energy board would be involved as a precaution.

Also Saturday, police confirmed that a raid earlier in the week on the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur was part of the investigation. Abdul Samah, the police official, did not specify what authorities found there, but said the items were being tested for traces of any chemicals.

Iraqi forces facing stiff resistance in western Mosul

By SUSANNAH GEORGE, Associated Press

SOUTH OF MOSUL, Iraq (AP) — Iraqi forces pushed deeper into western Mosul Saturday amid stiff resistance from entrenched Islamic State fighters, a commander on the scene said.

Special forces Lt. Gen. Abdul-Wahab al-Saadi said that his troops are "moving very slowly" and that IS fighters are responding with car bombs, snipers and dozens of armed drones. Hundreds of civilian have fled the conflict zone, he said.

The drones have caused relatively few deaths, but have inflicted dozens of light injuries that have disrupted the pace of ground operations.

Al-Saadi said he expects the pace to increase after Iraqi forces retake territory and infrastructure on Mosul's southwestern edge — which will allow them to shorten supply lines and link up with forces in the city's east.

On the edge of a small village south of Mosul, dozens of families gathered against a crude cinderblock wall. Many said they were from villages outside Mosul and had been forced to march to the city more than four months ago to serve as human shields.

"We've been through terrible times," said Juri Fathi, a mother of six who was forced to live in a school in Mosul for three months. "I had to burn my children's clothing just for warmth."

Groups of men were screened at the site against a database of IS suspects and two prisoners were dragged past the crowd and into an abandoned building.

"We brought them directly from inside Mosul," said an Iraqi special forces soldier from inside the Humvee that delivered the detainees. He spoke on condition of anonymity in line with regulations. "They were shooting at us, I saw them with my own eyes," he said.

Iraqi forces declared eastern Mosul "fully liberated" in January after officially launching the operation to retake the city in October.

Meanwhile, the Saudi Foreign Minister was in Baghdad Saturday — the first high level visit of a Saudi official to the country since the 2003 U.S.-led invasion — to meet with his Iraqi counterpart, Ibrahim al-Jaafari, and Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi.

In a statement issued by the foreign ministry, al-Jaafari said the visit was to discuss cooperation in combating terrorism, adding, "The ties that bind are many, and the visit comes to restore bilateral relations to their correct course."

The statement also called on Saudi Arabia to reiterate its position against Turkish ground troops in Iraq.

Bottega Veneta exudes 1940s Hollywood glamour in Milan

By COLLEEN BARRY, AP Fashion writer

MILAN (AP) — Milan Fashion Week took a formal turn on the third day of previews for next fall and winter. Mindful of the price point, designers were not churning out looks that could be tossed into a suitcase for a fanciful journey, but rather pieces that could hang in the closet for years to come, even left alone for a period only to re-emerge as relevant as the day they were purchased.

The old debate continued about whether to get items to the store quickly to satisfy the consumer accustomed to instant gratification. But while some designers were quick to get out capsule collections, from Moschino to Ermanno Scervino, the overriding Milan mindset retained its commitment to luxury craftsmanship and materials, which cannot be rushed.

Some highlights from Saturday's shows, including Bottega Veneta, Missoni, Scervino and Jil Sander.

HOLLYWOOD'S GOLDEN ERA AT BOTTEGA VENETA

Bottega Veneta's looks for next season exuded a 1940s Hollywood glamour, with a strictly formal collection for men and women.

The female silhouette befitted any Hollywood diva: broad shoulders, rounded hips and tailored at the waist with long continuous lines. Creative director Tomas Maier said the shape conveys "the pencil mark on a sketch."

Sweeping metallic-thread evening dresses created a liquid effect and had distinctive detailing, with one tying demurely on the derriere. Riding trousers were the staple for daywear, worn with tucked-sweaters and knee-high boots. Contemporary touches included multi-directional pleats on the daytime dresses — a technique achieved with a mostly polyester base to keep the shape — and a disciplined deployment of sequins and elegant studs. Big furry coats were from goats, a purposefully sustainable choice.

Glamorous accessories finished the looks: sheer black hose with polka dots, suede and nappa wedge footwear and crystal combs sweeping the hair into place. Colors included bright ochre and tangerine for the day and ice blue and desert rose for the evening.

Bottega Veneta's menswear also started with formal wear, with both smoking jackets that nipped in the waist and bombers paired with bow ties. Maier said the two clothing lines were conceived together, sharing materials and ideas.

DESIGNING FOR A WORLD OF WOMEN

Despite the collection's strong point of view on Saturday, Bottega Veneta's creative director, Tomas Maier, said he had no specific muse in mind.

"I never think about one single woman. I grew up in a home with a lot of women, a lot of sisters, my mother and aunts. Everyone very different, everyone with their own personality and their own problems," Maier said backstage. "That really took me off the road of having a dream woman."

Instead, he deliberately seeks to create looks that work for women of different shapes, skin tones and hair colors.

"It is on our minds at all times," he said.

BIRD OF PARADISE FOR VIONNET

The French brand Vionnet made its Milan runway debut Friday evening in the 15th-century Casa degli Atellani palace, recreating a salon atmosphere amid carved wooden panels and centuries-old frescoes.

"We are Made-in-Italy, and this is why we are here in Milan today," said creative director Goga Ashkenazi, who took over the historic brand in 2012. "There may be a time when we go back to Paris, but for us, it is the same. We feel very at home here."

The collection was inspired by the exotic bird-of-paradise, which Ashkenazi compared to "women of modernity" like Yoko Ono and Imam.

"They belong to the world, and they are amazingly self-confident, each one a character," she said.

Avian references appeared in encyclopedic prints on silken fabrics, while the bird-of-paradise's colorful plumage also inspired flashes of colors, including turquoise, green and pinks, which contrasted with taupe and black.

Ashkenazi captured the fluidity of the brand founded in 1912 with light chiffon and crepe de chine silks that conveyed classical Greco-Roman styles. But she kept it modern with contrasting bias-cut denim, including flowing bell bottoms, and twists on dresses that had an industrial touch, inspired by the drill. Even the shearlings hung on the body in a fluid manner.

"That was the intention, the break in styles," she said. "We are respecting our beautiful history of course, but we are giving it a twist."

Follow Colleen Barry on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/collbarry>

Kansas community tries to heal from shooting; bar to reopen

By JIM SUHR, Associated Press

OLATHE, Kan. (AP) — In the middle of a crowded bar, Adam Purinton yelled at two Indian men to "get out of my country," witnesses said, then opened fire in an attack that killed one of the men and wounded the other, as well as a third man who tried to help.

Hours later, the 51-year-old former air traffic controller reportedly told a bartender in another town that he needed a place to hide because he had just killed two Middle Eastern men.

In India, the father of one of the wounded men called Wednesday's attack in the Kansas City suburbs a hate crime, but authorities on Friday declined to discuss a motive as they investigated. The shooting swiftly stoked fears about the treatment of immigrants, who feel targeted by President Donald Trump's promises to ban certain travelers, build a wall along the Mexico border and put "America first."

The president has been especially vocal about the threat posed by Islamic terrorist groups. Both of the Indian men were Hindu.

The slain man was identified as Srinivas Kuchibhotla, 32. His widow said he came to the U.S. in 2005 to pursue a master's degree at the University of Texas at El Paso and worked in Iowa for six years before moving to the Kansas City area.

"He did not deserve a death like this," Sunayana Dumala said Friday at a news conference organized by her husband's employer, the GPS device-maker Garmin. "I don't know what to say. We've read many times in newspapers of some kind of shooting happening somewhere. I was always concerned, 'Are we doing the right thing staying in the U.S. or America?' But he always assured me good things happen in America."

Though she did not mention Trump by name, she directed anger at the U.S. government, asking what officials would do to stop hate crimes.

"Not everyone will be harmful to this country," she said.

Purinton was jailed on murder and attempted murder charges. His first court appearance was scheduled for Monday.

A bartender at Austins Bar and Grill in the suburb of Olathe said Purinton used racial slurs before firing. He was taken into custody about five hours later after speaking with another bartender at an Applebee's some 70 miles away in Clinton, Missouri.

The Kansas City Star reported Purinton's comments to the second bartender. The paper did not cite its

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sources.

The other men who were shot were identified as 32-year-old Alok Madasani, who was released from the hospital Thursday, and 24-year-old Ian Grillot, who remained hospitalized.

In a phone interview with The New York Times on Friday night, Madasani described the remarks made by the man sitting near him and Mr. Kuchibhotla at the restaurant. "He asked us what visa are we currently on and whether we are staying here illegally," Mr. Madasani said. Both men were educated in the United States and were working here legally.

"We didn't react," Madasani said. "People do stupid things all the time. This guy took it to the next level."

Madasani said he went in to get a manager, and by the time he returned to the patio, the man was being escorted out.

Madasani's father, Jaganmohan Reddy, said he had spoken with his wounded son by phone from India and was worried about his safety.

"I request other parents to think twice before sending their children to the United States," he said.

As engineers for Garmin, Kuchibhotla and Madasani worked at the company's main campus just a mile from the scene of the shooting. Garmin is one of the region's best-known employers.

Local police were working with the FBI. Spokeswoman Bridget Patton said the federal agency's role is to help determine if a civil rights violation occurred.

Purinton, who is being held on \$2 million bond, was moved Friday from Missouri to Kansas. Because he has not yet appeared in court, he did not have an attorney formally assigned to his case.

Beverly Morris, who has lived next door to Purinton in Olathe for about 20 years, said he never made her feel unsafe.

"He seemed like a good guy," Morris said, but "anybody who knew him knew he had a drinking problem."

Another neighbor, Michael Shimeall, told The Star that Purinton seemed friendly and never showed a temper "or anything like that."

He recalled that Purinton was helpful with neighbors when they had to dig out after snowstorms or pick up a tree blown down by wind. He said Purinton had photos of the ships he served on in the Navy and other Navy items in his home.

FAA records from the 1990s indicate that Purinton was a pilot and was licensed to work in an airport control tower. Agency spokeswoman Elizabeth Isham Cory says Purinton left the FAA 17 years ago in 2000.

At the time of the attack, bar patrons were watching a college basketball game on television. When Purinton began harassing the two men, Grillot "stood up for them," bartender Garret Bohnen told The Star.

Witnesses also told the newspaper about Purinton's yelling about leaving the country.

As the gunfire began, Grillot hid under a table until nine shots had been fired. Believing the suspect's magazine was empty, he chased the gunman in hopes of subduing him.

A bullet went through his right hand and into his chest, just missing a major artery but fracturing a vertebra in Grillot's neck.

"Another half inch, I could be dead or never walk again," he said Thursday from his hospital bed in a video from the University of Kansas Health System.

He did not describe what led to the shooting, saying only that he felt compelled to intervene to help others.

"I was just doing what anyone should have done for another human being," he said.

About 60 children were playing at a church across the street from the bar when the shooting happened. Jeramie Albin, a volunteer for the youth program at First Baptist Church, said Friday that he didn't think much about a noise that sounded like "somebody dropped a bunch of books."

Then he learned about the shooting.

The church immediately went into lockdown. Volunteers herded children into the church basement, careful not to scare them, while police officers arrived on the scene. For the next 20 minutes, volunteers led songs to distract the children from police lights outside and helicopters overhead.

The bar was scheduled to reopen Saturday even as the community tries to recover from the attack.

The Indian government said its diplomats would monitor the Kansas investigation. Kuchibhotla was from the southern state of Telangana, and his body was to be transported to the capital city of Hyderabad, where his family lives.

Mourners poured into Hyderabad. His parents have another son working in the United States.

Associated Press writers John Hanna in Topeka, Jim Salter in St. Louis, Katie Kull in Olathe, and Heather Hollingsworth and Margaret Stafford in Kansas City, Missouri, contributed to this report.

As party rebuilds, Democrats seek a new DNC leader

By **BILL BARROW**, Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Democrats are beginning the process of rebuilding their party by choosing a new national chairman charged with turning widespread opposition to President Donald Trump into more election victories.

With the outcome of Saturday's vote uncertain, former Labor Secretary Tom Perez and Minnesota Rep. Keith Ellison made a final push Friday to cajole support from the hundreds of state party leaders, donors and activists who make up the Democratic National Committee and determine the party's direction.

Perez supporters say he's on the cusp of the required majority. Ellison maintains that he is still a viable candidate. A handful of other candidates are holding out hope that neither Ellison nor Perez can command a majority, opening up the race for an upset in later rounds of voting.

Each of the front-runners promises an aggressive counter to the Trump administration, while rebuilding a depleted organization at the state and local level — a tacit admission that party infrastructure withered during Barack Obama's eight years in the White House, despite the president's personal electoral success. The results have shown: Republicans now control the White House, Capitol Hill and nearly two-thirds of state legislatures and governorships.

"We are fighting for a party that is not the status quo," Ellison told his supporters late Friday, arguing that Democrats have become too timid and lost touch with too many voters across much of the country by abandoning working people. The key, he said, is to "knock on doors and engage people" while pushing policies that benefit them. "Let's have a debate it," he said. "You're not scared. I'm not scared. Let's do it."

At a nearby reception, Perez said the party must be the center of Trump resistance.

"The most important word in a democracy is that simple two-letter: 'We,'" he said, promising he would help Democrats capitalize on the budding opposition movement. "It's amazing what we can accomplish when we have strong parties everywhere that allow us to put those values into action," he said.

Perez got into the race at Obama's urging, but he has pushed back on the notion that represents the same "establishment" label that dogged Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign. Ellison has endorsements from Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, who challenged Clinton for the Democratic nomination. But he has the endorsement of Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer.

Ellison also brought in New York Mayor Bill de Blasio and NFL wide receiver Anquan Boldin to glad-hand DNC members Friday. Former DNC leader Howard Dean, widely hailed as a successful party chair, worked the hallways on behalf of a third candidate, Mayor Pete Buttigieg of South Bend, Indiana.

Clinton has stayed out of the DNC contest, but she made a video appearance at the party gathering Friday.

"Let resistance plus persistence equal progress for our party and our country," she said, praising the Jan. 21 women's marches across the country and other signs of public criticism of Trump. She also indirectly noted her popular vote victory, which Trump has insisted was not legitimate. "Nearly 66 million votes," she said, "are fueling grassroots energy and activism."

Follow Barrow on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/BillBarrowAP> .

AP Explains: Why the Democratic Party chair race matters

By **BILL BARROW**, Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — National Democrats will elect a new chair whose task is to steady a reeling party and capitalize on the widespread opposition to Republican President Donald Trump.

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Leading contenders in the Saturday vote are former Labor Secretary Tom Perez and Minnesota Rep. Keith Ellison. Mayor Pete Buttigieg of South Bend, Indiana, is a longshot hoping he can rise to the top if neither of the two front-runners can capture majority support from the Democratic National Committee. Here's an explanation of why an election among party insiders has drawn so much attention.

WHAT DOES THE PARTY CHAIRMAN DO?

The chair is the Democratic National Committee's top executive. Outgoing Chairwoman Donna Brazile says her successor "must be fearless ... must have courage," but there's no absolute job description.

The post is part cheerleader, part fundraiser, part organizer and recruiter, part public messenger. It's a much more visible role when a party no longer occupies the White House, since the president is de facto leader of his own party. Presidents also name their own party chairs, with the national committee operating essentially as a political arm of the Oval Office. The losing party's chair, though, is elected by its national committee members.

Ellison, Perez and Buttigieg have all committed to oppose the Trump administration with gusto, but concentrate on nuts-and-bolts rebuilding of party infrastructure that helps win elections.

The new chair won't be an undisputed "leader of the party." Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer of New York and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi of California will remain the highest ranking Democrats in Washington, but the DNC chair will play a major role in framing the party's arguments and identity, while charting a strategy to turn those into votes in upcoming elections.

WHY DOES IT MATTER SO MUCH THIS TIME?

Neither major party has had such a competitive chair election in recent history, but there's a reason for Democrats' existential lurching: They have as little actual political power around the country as they've had in 90 years. That means virtually no American voter has ever seen Democrats so removed from controlling the nation's policies.

Republicans run both houses of Congress, sit in 33 governor's chairs, control 32 state legislatures and, if Neil Gorsuch is confirmed by the Senate, will enjoy a conservative Supreme Court majority. The GOP has absolute control — the governor and legislature — in 24 states. For Democrats, that number is seven, with none between the West Coast and the Northeast.

The chair also comes to the job after an election marred by Russian hackers stealing the DNC's internal communications.

New Hampshire Chairman Ray Buckley puts it plainly: "Our party has a long way to go."

WHO ACTUALLY VOTES?

Leading contenders have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars traveling and wooing the 442 eligible voters who make up the Democratic National Committee (a handful of the 447 DNC seats are vacant).

Winning requires a majority of those voting Saturday, with as many rounds as it takes to identify the winner. Perez's campaign insists he's nearing that threshold, though Ellison disputes that notion. Buttigieg acknowledges that his strategy is to hope neither Perez nor Ellison can reach a majority after several ballots, leading DNC members to turn to him as an alternative.

IS THIS CLINTON VS. SANDERS II?

There are undertones of the 2016 presidential primary, but Ellison, Perez and their backers say framing the race that way is wrong.

An unapologetic liberal, Ellison has highlighted his endorsement from Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, the independent whose strong grass-roots support nearly upended the Democratic primary.

Perez got in the race at the urging of then-President Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton allies, and he has the endorsement of former Vice President Joe Biden. That makes him the perceived establishment candidate at a time many rank-and-file Democrats want a house-cleaning at the party's top echelon.

But Texas Democratic Chairman Gilberto Hinojosa explains, "I come from the left, left, left wing of the Democratic Party, and I fully support Tom Perez." Noting Perez's career work for organized labor and as a civil rights attorney, Hinojosa adds, "Tom is absolutely a progressive."

Wisconsin Chairwoman Martha Lanning says her delegation includes "many strong Hillary Clinton supporters backing Keith Ellison." Lanning backs Ellison not because he is a "progressive champion" but because of his plans for rebuilding state and local parties.

It's also worth noting that Ellison has an endorsement from Schumer, the Senate leader who's not exactly a hero in liberal Democratic circles.

"This isn't about Hillary Clinton or Bernie Sanders," said Lanning. "You have to look at whether somebody is going to be more about just supporting the (presidential) nominee or truly about a 50-state strategy."

Brazile, meanwhile, scoffed at the idea of a 2016 redux. "I was for her. I was for him," she quipped. "Hell, no! We are for them, the people of America!"

Follow Bill Barrow on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/BillBarrowAP> .

Agency plans to award Mexico border wall contracts by April

By ELLIOT SPAGAT, Associated Press

SAN DIEGO (AP) — U.S. Customs and Border Protection said Friday that it plans to start awarding contracts by mid-April for President Donald Trump's proposed border wall with Mexico, signaling that he is aggressively pursuing plans to erect "a great wall" along the 2,000-mile border.

The agency said it will request bids on or around March 6 and that companies would have to submit "concept papers" to design and build prototypes by March 10, according to FedBizOpps.gov, a website for federal contractors. The field of candidates will be narrowed by March 20, and finalists must submit offers with their proposed costs by March 24.

The president told the Conservative Political Action Conference on Friday that construction will start "very soon" and is "way, way, way ahead of schedule."

The agency's notice gave no details on where the wall would be built first and how many miles would be covered initially. Homeland Security Secretary John Kelly has sought employees' opinions during border tours of California, Arizona and Texas.

It's unclear how soon Congress would provide funding and how much. The Government Accountability Office estimates it would cost on average \$6.5 million a mile for a fence to keep out people who try to enter on foot and \$1.8 million a mile for vehicle barriers. There are currently 354 miles of pedestrian fencing and 300 miles of vehicle barriers, much of it built during President George W. Bush's second term.

Republican leaders in Congress have said Trump's wall would cost between \$12 billion and \$15 billion. Trump has suggested \$12 billion.

An internal Homeland Security Department report prepared for Kelly estimates the cost of extending the wall along the entire U.S.-Mexico border at about \$21 billion, according to a U.S. government official who is involved in border issues. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because the report has not been made public.

The Homeland Security report proposes an initial phase that would extend fences 26 miles and a second wave that would add 151 miles, plus 272 "replacement" miles where fences are already installed, according to the official. Those two phases would cost \$5 billion.

The price tag will depend largely on the height, materials and other specifications that have not yet been defined.

Granite Construction Inc., Vulcan Materials Co. and Martin Marietta Materials Inc. are seen as potential bidders. Kiewit Corp. built one of the more expensive stretches of fencing so far at a cost of about \$16 million a mile, a project in San Diego that involved filling a deep canyon known as Smuggler's Gulch.

Cement maker Cemex SAB is also seen as a potential beneficiary even though it is based in Mexico.

Associated Press writer Alicia A. Caldwell in Washington contributed to this report.

White House defends contacts with FBI over Russia reports

By JULIE PACE, AP White House Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — The White House on Friday defended chief of staff Reince Priebus against accusations he breached a government firewall when he asked FBI Director James Comey to publicly dispute media reports that Trump campaign advisers had been frequently in touch with Russian intelligence agents.

President Donald Trump's spokesman, Sean Spicer, argued Priebus had little choice but to seek Comey's assistance in rebutting what Spicer said were inaccurate reports about contacts during last year's presidential campaign. The FBI did not issue the statement requested by Priebus and has given no sign one is forthcoming.

"I don't know what else we were supposed to do," Spicer said.

The Justice Department has policies in place to limit communications between the White House and the FBI about pending investigations. Trump officials on Friday not only confirmed contacts between Priebus and the FBI, but engaged in an extraordinary public airing of those private conversations.

Spicer said it was the FBI that first approached the White House about the veracity of a New York Times story asserting that Trump advisers had contacts with Russian intelligence officials during the presidential campaign. Spicer said Priebus then asked both FBI Director James Comey and Deputy Director Andrew McCabe if they would condemn the story publicly, which they declined to do.

"The chief of staff said, well, you've put us in a very difficult situation," Spicer said. "You've told us that a story that made some fairly significant accusations was not true. And now you want us to just sit out there."

The FBI would not comment on the matter or verify the White House account. The CIA also declined to comment.

The White House also enlisted the help of Republicans on Capitol Hill to talk to reporters about the New York Times story. Jack Langer, a spokesman for Rep. Devin Nunes, R-Calif., the chairman of the House intelligence committee, said the White House asked Nunes to speak with one reporter. He said the chairman told the journalist the same thing that he has said publicly many times before — that he had asked but not received any information from intelligence officials that would warrant a committee investigation of any American citizens' contacts with Russian intelligence officials.

Langer acknowledged that this could make it harder to convince people that the House investigation into the matter will be independent and free of political bias, but he said the White House did not tell Nunes what to tell the reporter, or give him "talking points."

The ranking Democrat on the committee, California Rep. Adam Schiff, D-Calif., said if the White House indeed contrived to have intelligence officials contradict unfavorable news reports, it threatens the independence of the intelligence community.

"Intelligence professionals are not there to serve as the president's PR firm," Schiff said, adding, "For its part, the intelligence community must resist improper efforts like these by the administration to politicize its role."

The Washington Post reported Friday that the chairman of the Senate intelligence committee also was enlisted by the White House. The newspaper quoted Sen. Richard Burr, R-N.C., saying he had conversations about Russia-related news reports with the White House and engaged with news organizations to dispute articles by The New York Times and CNN.

The ranking Democrat on the Senate intelligence committee, Mark Warner of Virginia, said Friday night that he had called CIA Director Mike Pompeo and Burr to express his "grave concerns about what this means for the independence" of the congressional investigation already underway.

Warner said he emphasized to the two that he would "not accept any process that is undermined by political interference." He said if the Senate intelligence committee cannot conduct a proper probe, he will support whomever can do it.

Friday's revelations were the latest wrinkle in Trump's already complicated relationship with the FBI and

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other intelligence agencies. He's accused intelligence officials of releasing classified information about him to the media, declaring in a tweet Friday morning that the FBI was "totally unable to stop the national security 'leakers' that have permeated our government for a long time."

House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi accused Priebus of "an outrageous breach of the FBI's independence" and called on the Justice Department's inspector general to look into all conversations Priebus and other White House officials have held with the FBI on ongoing investigations.

"The rule of law depends on the FBI's complete independence, free from political pressure from the targets of its investigations," Pelosi said.

A 2009 memo from then-Attorney General Eric Holder said the Justice Department is to advise the White House on pending criminal or civil investigations "only when it is important for the performance of the president's duties and appropriate from a law enforcement perspective."

Ron Hosko, a retired FBI assistant director who oversaw criminal investigations, said the discussions between the FBI and the Trump White House were inadvisable.

"It is a very slippery slope," Hosko said. "Do I get in the position of where I'm updating the White House on my priority criminal cases? The answer is no, I should not be doing that."

Other FBI veterans said the interactions between Priebus and the FBI were not unprecedented. Robert Anderson, a retired executive assistant director who served under Comey and oversaw counterintelligence investigations, said contacts between the bureau and White House are "usually very-well documented" in order to avoid the perception of inappropriate contacts.

CNN first reported that Priebus had asked the FBI for help, and a White House official confirmed the matter to The Associated Press Thursday night. On Friday morning, two other senior White House officials summoned reporters to a briefing to expand on the timeline of events.

The White House officials would only discuss the matter on the condition of anonymity. Two hours later, Trump panned news stories that rely on anonymous sources, telling a conservative conference that reporters "shouldn't be allowed to use sources unless they use somebody's name."

Spicer later briefed some reporters on the record. The Associated Press declined to participate in that briefing because some major news organizations were not invited, but audio of the briefing was later circulated by reporters who attended.

Trump has been shadowed by questions about potential ties to Russia since winning the election. U.S. intelligence agencies have concluded that Russia meddled in the campaign in an effort to help Trump defeat Democrat Hillary Clinton.

On Feb. 14, The New York Times reported that intelligence agencies had collected phone records and call intercepts showing frequent communication between Trump advisers and Russian intelligence agents during the campaign. Trump has said he is not aware of such contacts.

The White House says Priebus was holding a previously scheduled meeting with McCabe the morning after the Times story was published. According to Spicer, McCabe told Priebus in "very colorful terms" that the report was inaccurate, prompting the chief of staff to ask if the FBI would make its view known publicly.

Spicer said McCabe told the White House the bureau did not want to be in the practice of rebutting news stories. A similar message was conveyed to Priebus later in the day by Comey, according to the White House spokesman.

The White House said McCabe and Comey instead gave Priebus the go-ahead to discredit the story publicly, something the FBI has not confirmed.

Priebus alluded to his contacts with the FBI over the weekend, telling Fox News that "the top levels of the intelligence community" had assured him that the allegations of campaign contacts with Russia were "not only grossly overstated but also wrong."

During the campaign, Trump and other Republicans strongly criticized a meeting between Attorney General Loretta Lynch and former President Bill Clinton, husband of Trump's general election opponent. The meeting came as the FBI — which is overseen by the Justice Department — was investigating Hillary Clinton's use of a private email address and personal internet server.

Spicer said he was not aware of an FBI investigation into Trump campaign advisers' contacts with Russia. Administration officials have acknowledged that the FBI interviewed ousted national security adviser Michael Flynn about his communications with Russia's ambassador to the U.S. during the transition.

Flynn was fired after it was revealed that he misled Vice President Mike Pence and other White House officials about the content of those conversations.

Associated Press writers Deb Riechmann, Eric Tucker, Vivian Salama, Jill Colvin and Ken Thomas contributed to this report.

Follow Julie Pace at <http://twitter.com/jpaceDC>

Syrian who worked on nominated film can't attend Oscars

By **BRADLEY KLAPPER, Associated Press**

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. immigration authorities are barring entry to a 21-year-old Syrian cinematographer who worked on a harrowing film about his nation's civil war, "The White Helmets," that has been nominated for an Academy Award.

According to internal Trump administration correspondence seen by The Associated Press, the Department of Homeland Security has decided at the last minute to block Khaled Khateeb from traveling to Los Angeles for the Oscars.

Khateeb was scheduled to arrive Saturday in Los Angeles on a Turkish Airlines flight departing from Istanbul. But his plans have been upended after U.S. officials reported finding "derogatory information" regarding Khateeb.

Derogatory information is a broad category that can include anything from terror connections to passport irregularities. Asked for comment, a spokeswoman for the Department of Homeland Security, Gillian Christensen, said, "A valid travel document is required for travel to the United States."

"The White Helmets," a 40-minute Netflix documentary, has been nominated for Best Documentary Short. If the film wins the Oscar, the award would go to director Orlando von Einsiedel and producer Joanna Natasegara. Khateeb is one of three people credited for cinematography; Franklin Dow is the film's director of photography.

The film focuses on the rescue workers who risk their lives to save Syrians affected by civil war. Many of the group's members have been killed by Syrian President Bashar Assad's air forces. The group also was nominated for last year's Nobel Peace Prize.

"The White Helmets" includes emblematic scenes of the deadly 6-year-old conflict: people digging through destroyed homes looking for survivors, at constant risk of "double tap" attacks that target first responders after they've arrived at the scene of a strike.

Khateeb had been issued a visa to attend the ceremony with Hollywood's biggest stars. But Turkish authorities detained him this week, according to the internal U.S. government correspondence, and he suddenly needed a passport waiver from the United States to enter the country.

The correspondence indicated he would not receive such a waiver. There was no explanation in the correspondence for why Turkey detained Khateeb.

Transgender boy wins first 2 matches of girls tournament

By **KRISTIE RIEKEN, AP Sports Writer**

CYPRESS, Texas (AP) — Mack Beggs won two matches at the Texas state championships Friday. But the larger conflict — over whether a 17-year-old transgender boy should be wrestling girls — remained unsettled.

Beggs' family has said he would rather be wrestling boys. Some girls and their advocates agree, arguing that the testosterone treatments Beggs has been taking while in transition from female to male have made him too strong to wrestle fairly against women. But under the state's governing policy for athletics,

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students must wrestle against the gender listed on their birth certificates.

Beggs beat Taylor Latham in the 110-pound class Friday. The score was 18-7.

It was a match Latham's mother didn't want to happen. Her daughter, she said, was wrestling someone whose body was chemically toned for strength.

"I wanted her to forfeit as a protective mom," Lisa Latham said. "She's a fighter. She's not a quitter. She's a senior. She's fought for the last three years to get here. She was going to see it through even though I wasn't sharing the same opinion."

At match's end Beggs shook hands with Latham before pointing high in the stands to cheering fans wearing the colors of his school, Eules Trinity. He celebrated for a few seconds. Then Beggs and his grandmother, led by his coach, jogged across the mats and into an area restricted to athletes and coaches.

While many cheered Beggs, others said the match was unfair. Patti Overstreet, a self-described wrestling parent, left her seat shouting, "that's cheating" and "big cheater!"

"Look at how beefed up she is," Overstreet said, referring to Beggs. "It's because she's taking an enhancement. Whether she's a boy, girl, wants to be purple or blue it doesn't matter. When you're using a drug and you're 10 times stronger than the person you're wrestling because of that drug that (shouldn't be) allowed."

Later Beggs beat Mya Engert 12-4 to push his record to 54-0 and leave him two victories away from a state title. Beggs got a bloody nose during that match and had to stuff gauze up his right nostril to stop the bleeding. It didn't slow him down much as he added several points after that to capture another decisive win.

Beggs hugged Engert and pumped his fist in the air after the win before darting off the mat. Engert was weeping as she walked away, and her coach shooed reporters from the area with a stern: "No comment."

Beggs will resume competition in the semifinals on Saturday morning.

The controversy over Beggs' participation in the women's sport comes at a crucial moment, as the public and politicians debate how they should react to the growing belief that gender is fluid. Just this week, the Trump administration announced an end to federal protections which allowed transgender students to use facilities based on their gender identity, leaving states and school districts to determine their own policies.

And in Texas, lawmakers are considering a bill similar to the controversial HB2, a law in North Carolina that prompted the NBA to move this year's All-Star game out of that state. If passed, the Texas version, called SB6, would require transgender people to use the bathroom of their "biological sex."

As Beggs arrived for weigh-in on Friday morning, several girls excitedly ran up and embraced him as he smiled and laughed. Soon after that he pulled a gray hoodie down so low that it all but obscured his shock of bright blond hair. Standing in line among a sea of girls, he gnawed the nails of his left hand aggressively, perhaps nervous about the match — or the controversy surrounding it.

The University Interscholastic League, which oversees athletics in Texas public schools, enacted the birth certificate policy on Aug. 1.

Attorney Jim Baudhuin tried and failed to get injunctions before both the district and regional meets to prevent Beggs from competing while he transitions. He told The Associated Press earlier this week that he doesn't blame Beggs for the situation, but faults the UIL.

"The more I learn about this, the more I realize that she's just trying to live her life and her family is, too," Baudhuin said of Beggs. "She's being forced into that position. Who knows, through discovery we may find out that's not the case. But every indication is, the way the winds are going now, the blame rests with the UIL and the superintendents."

Despite criticism of the policy, UIL executives don't envision a change.

"Ninety-five percent of the school superintendents in Texas voted for the rule as it was proposed, which was to use birth certificates," UIL deputy director Jamey Harrison said. "So any rule can be reconsidered, but ... given the overwhelming support for that rule, I don't expect it to change anytime soon."

Beggs reached the state tournament after two opponents forfeited at the regional competition amid concerns about the testosterone treatments. Harrison refused to concede that such forfeitures taint the tournament.

"We never like students to avoid the opportunity to compete. That's the whole point of having competitions," he said. "But to answer your question specifically: Do we believe that any accomplishment by an individual or the overall event in itself is somehow tainted or painted in a negative light because a student may choose to forfeit? No we do not."

AP Exclusive: DHS report disputes threat from banned nations

By VIVIAN SALAMA and ALICIA A. CALDWELL, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Analysts at the Homeland Security Department's intelligence arm found insufficient evidence that citizens of seven Muslim-majority countries included in President Donald Trump's travel ban pose a terror threat to the United States.

A draft document obtained by The Associated Press concludes that citizenship is an "unlikely indicator" of terrorism threats to the United States and that few people from the countries Trump listed in his travel ban have carried out attacks or been involved in terrorism-related activities in the U.S. since Syria's civil war started in 2011.

Trump cited terrorism concerns as the primary reason he signed the sweeping temporary travel ban in late January, which also halted the U.S. refugee program. A federal judge in Washington state blocked the government from carrying out the order earlier this month. Trump said Friday a new edict would be announced soon. The administration has been working on a new version that could withstand legal challenges.

Homeland Security spokeswoman Gillian Christensen on Friday did not dispute the report's authenticity, but said it was not a final comprehensive review of the government's intelligence.

"While DHS was asked to draft a comprehensive report on this issue, the document you're referencing was commentary from a single intelligence source versus an official, robust document with thorough interagency sourcing," Christensen said. "The ... report does not include data from other intelligence community sources. It is incomplete."

The Homeland Security report is based on unclassified information from Justice Department press releases on terrorism-related convictions and attackers killed in the act, State Department visa statistics, the 2016 Worldwide Threat Assessment from the U.S. intelligence community and the State Department Country Reports on Terrorism 2015.

The three-page report challenges Trump's core claims. It said that of 82 people the government determined were inspired by a foreign terrorist group to carry out or try to carry out an attack in the United States, just over half were U.S. citizens born in the United States. The others were from 26 countries, led by Pakistan, Somalia, Bangladesh, Cuba, Ethiopia, Iraq and Uzbekistan. Of these, only Somalia and Iraq were among the seven nations included in the ban.

Of the other five nations, one person each from Iran, Sudan and Yemen was also involved in those terrorism cases, but none from Syria. It did not say if any were Libyan.

The report also found that terrorist organizations in Iran, Libya, Somalia and Sudan are regionally focused, while groups in Iraq, Syria and Yemen do pose a threat to the U.S.

The seven countries were included in a law President Barack Obama signed in 2015 that updated visa requirements for foreigners who had traveled to those countries.

Christensen said the countries were also selected in part because they lacked the ability to properly vet their citizens and don't cooperate with U.S. efforts to screen people hoping to come to the U.S.

The report was prepared as part of an internal review Trump requested after his executive order was blocked by the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. It was drafted by staff of the Homeland Security Department's Intelligence and Analysis branch at the direction of its acting leader, David Glawe.

White House spokesman Michael Short said this was not the full report that Trump had requested. He said he believes "the intel community is combining resources to put together a comprehensive report using all available sources, not just open sources, and which is driven by data, not politics."

The intelligence document was circulated beyond Homeland Security.

The draft document reflects the tensions between the president's political appointees and the civil ser-

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vants tasked with carrying out Trump's ambitious and aggressive agenda. Trump has repeatedly complained about leaks meant to undercut his policies and suggested he does not trust holdovers from the Obama administration.

Trump originally said the ban was necessary to overhaul the vetting system for both refugees and would-be foreign visitors, saying that terrorists may try to exploit weaknesses to gain access to the United States. The order sparked chaos, outrage and widespread protests, with travelers detained at airports and panicked families searching for relatives.

But several courts quickly intervened and the 9th Circuit ultimately upheld a ruling blocking the ban and challenged the administration's claim that it was motivated by terrorism fears.

Trump's ban temporarily barred citizens from the seven countries from coming to the United States for three months. The order also temporarily shut down the U.S. refugee program for four months and indefinitely banned anyone from Syria.

A senior administration official told the AP on Sunday that a draft of the revised order will target those same seven countries. The official would not be named discussing the document before it is made public.

In a speech to the Conservative Political Action Committee Friday, Trump reiterated his claims on terrorism. "We are going to keep radical Islamic terrorists the hell out of our country," Trump said.

He said he singled out the seven countries because they had already been deemed a security concern by the Obama administration.

Intelligence document available at <http://apne.ws/2ISKNUo>

Contact Alicia A. Caldwell on Twitter at www.twitter.com/acaldwellap and Vivian Salama at www.twitter.com/vmsalama or <https://www.ap.org/tips>

White House bars major news outlets from informal briefing

By LYNN ELBER, Associated Press

News organizations including The New York Times, the Los Angeles Times, CNN and Politico were blocked from joining an informal, on-the-record White House press briefing Friday.

The Associated Press chose not to participate in the briefing after White House press secretary Sean Spicer restricted the number of journalists included. Typically, the daily briefing is televised and open to all news organizations credentialed to cover the White House.

"The AP believes the public should have as much access to the president as possible," Lauren Easton, the AP's director of media relations, said in a statement.

On Friday, hours after President Donald Trump delivered a speech blasting the media, Spicer invited only a pool of news organizations that represents and shares reporting with the larger press corps. He also invited several other major news outlets, as well as smaller organizations including the conservative Washington Times, One America News Network and Breitbart News, whose former executive chairman, Steve Bannon, is Trump's chief strategist. When the additional news organizations attempted to gain access, they weren't allowed to enter.

The White House said it felt "everyone was represented" by those in the pool and the invited organizations.

"We decided to add a couple of additional people beyond the pool. Nothing more than that," said White House spokeswoman Sarah Sanders.

When asked by a reporter attending whether he was playing favorites, Spicer said the White House had "shown an abundance of accessibility," according to an audio recording of the briefing later circulated by the pool.

The pool included Reuters, Bloomberg, CBS, Hearst Newspapers and CBS Radio. Others in the briefing were Fox, NBC and ABC. Bloomberg reported that its reporter was unaware of the exclusions until after the briefing.

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John Roberts, Fox's chief White House correspondent, told anchor Shepard Smith on the air Friday that Fox supports complaints being filed by the White House Correspondents Association and pool TV networks.

"You can speculate, Shep, that there might be some extenuating circumstances as to why those people were not invited, we're going to look into that further..." Roberts said.

In a statement, the correspondent association's president, Jeff Mason, said the group was "protesting strongly" against how the briefing was handled by the White House.

CBS News said in a statement that it was the pool's radio and TV outlet Friday.

"We recorded audio of this event and quickly shared it out of an obligation to protect the interests of all pool members," the news division said.

When Spicer was asked by a reporter at the briefing whether he was playing favorites, he said he "disagreed with the premise of the question," according to the audio.

"We've brought more reporters into this process. And the idea that every time that every single person can't get their question answered or fit in a room that we're excluding people. We've actually gone above and beyond with making ourselves, our team, and our briefing room more accessible than probably any prior administration. And so I think you can take that to the bank.

"We do what we can to accommodate the press. I think we've gone above and beyond when it comes to accessibility, and openness and getting folks — our officials, our team."

During a panel discussion last December, Spicer said that open access for the media is "what makes a democracy a democracy versus a dictatorship."

Reaction to Friday's events from the barred outlets and others was swift.

Davan Maharaj, editor-in-chief and publisher of the Los Angeles Times, called the newspaper's exclusion "unfortunate."

"The public has a right to know, and that means being informed by a variety of news sources, not just those filtered by the White House press office in hopes of getting friendly coverage," Maharaj said in a statement. "Regardless of access, the Times will continue to report on the Trump administration without fear or favor."

Dean Baquet, executive editor of The New York Times, said that "nothing like this has ever happened at the White House in our long history of covering multiple administrations of different parties. We strongly protest the exclusion of The New York Times and the other news organizations. Free media access to a transparent government is obviously of crucial national interest."

CNN's Jake Tapper took aim at the White House as he kicked off "The Lead with Jake Tapper" hours after the briefing.

"A White House that has had some difficulty telling the truth and that has seemed to have trouble getting up to speed on the basic competent functioning of government, and a president who seems particularly averse to any criticism and has called the press the enemies of the American people — they're taking the next step in attempting to avoid checks and balances and accountability.

"It's not acceptable. In fact, it's petulant, and indicative of a lack of basic understanding of how an adult White House functions," Tapper said.

The Committee to Protect Journalists also condemned the move by the White House.

"We are concerned by the decision to bar reporters from a press secretary briefing," CPJ Executive Director Joel Simon said in a statement. "The U.S. should be promoting press freedom and access to information."

Elber reported from Los Angeles. AP Writer Frazier Moore in New York contributed to this report.

Bill Cosby won't face a barrage of accusers at his trial

By MARYCLAIRE DALE, Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — In a major break for Bill Cosby, a judge ruled Friday that just one of the comedian's multitude of other accusers can testify at his trial to bolster charges he drugged and violated a

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woman more than a decade ago.

The 79-year-old TV star is set to go on trial in June, accused of sexually assaulting former Temple University employee Andrea Constand at his suburban Philadelphia home in 2004. Prosecutors wanted to put 13 more women on the stand to show that his alleged conduct was part of a distinct pattern of behavior.

Montgomery County Judge Steven O'Neill disallowed all but one of those women, saying in a one-page ruling that he carefully weighed the possible value of their testimony against the potential prejudice to Cosby.

The one witness who can testify says the comic drugged and assaulted her in 1996 at a Los Angeles hotel.

Cosby's lawyer had no immediate comment, but the actor himself re-tweeted news stories on the ruling, adding the hashtags "#KeepWatching" and "#PayAttention."

The judge's decision is a setback for prosecutors and means the case will now rest more heavily on Constand's credibility.

"There is an obvious value to the prosecution when you have numerous accusers. That alone adds tremendous weight to the case," said lawyer Joseph McGettigan, a prosecutor in the Penn State sex abuse scandal.

The ruling could also shave weeks off the trial.

Cosby, who is free on \$1 million bail, could get 10 years in prison if convicted. He is expected in court again Monday to ask that the jurors be selected from another county because of the heavy publicity.

Prosecutors compiled the list of 13 potential witnesses from the nearly 50 women who have come forward in recent years to say they were drugged and molested — a barrage that destroyed Cosby's good-guy reputation as the star of TV's "Cosby Show" in the 1980s.

His lawyers objected to the testimony about "prior bad acts," saying that in some cases the sex was consensual, while others involved models and actresses falsely accusing Cosby to gain money or attention.

His attorneys also argued that some of the allegations were so vague — with some of the women unsure of when the alleged encounters even took place — that it would be impossible for Cosby to defend himself.

While the ruling is a big victory for Cosby at his trial, it could deprive him of grounds for appeal if he is convicted. In 2015, a Pennsylvania appeals court threw out a Roman Catholic Church official's conviction because the jury was allowed to hear from 23 priest-abuse victims who were not directly part of the case.

"It's the best of times and the worst of times for Cosby. It gives the defendant the opportunity to try the case that should be tried, the lone accuser," said defense lawyer William J. Brennan, who was involved in the church case. "If it doesn't go his way, he probably is limited on appellate issues. However, I'd take this, hands down, over the alternative."

The ruling is one of two key pretrial issues in the case. The judge earlier ruled that the jury can hear Cosby's damaging testimony from Constand's 2005 lawsuit against the comedian.

Cosby's deposition runs to nearly 1,000 pages and covers a string of extramarital liaisons dating to the 1960s. It was the release of the sealed testimony in 2015 that led prosecutors to reopen the case.

Constand told police he gave her three unmarked pills and then penetrated her with his fingers as she drifted in and out of consciousness. The comedian has said the sexual contact was consensual.

The additional accuser who can testify worked for one of Cosby's agents and had known the entertainer for six years when he invited her to lunch at his bungalow at the Bel Air Hotel to discuss her career plans.

She said he was in a robe and slippers when she arrived and offered her wine and a pill that she consumed after he assured her it was safe. She said he then sexually assaulted her on his bed.

At a news conference in 2015, she said she wanted to come forward at the time but feared retaliation. She said she left her job at the William Morris Agency because "I did not want to see or work with Mr. Cosby."

Among the other accusers who won't be allowed to testify, one said she was an aspiring actress when Cosby assaulted her at a home near Reno, Nevada, in 1984. Another said Cosby drugged and assaulted her in the late 1960s after befriending her and her 9-year-old son.

France opens full fake jobs inquiry into candidate Fillon

By ELAINE GANLEY, Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — The French financial prosecutor's office decided Friday to open a judicial inquiry surrounding the allegedly fake parliamentary aide jobs that conservative presidential candidate Francois Fillon gave to his wife and two of his children, pushing the case to a higher and riskier level for the man hoping to become the next president of France.

The announcement came as Fillon was holding a rally outside Paris. The conservative candidate was once the frontrunner in polls, but his ratings slipped with the probe into payments to family members that totaled more than 1 million euros (\$1.1 million) over many years.

After a preliminary investigation opened Jan. 25, the financial prosecutor's office decided to escalate and enlarge the case, turning it over to investigating judges who can bring charges or throw the case out. Critically, however, no one was named in the judicial investigation on a list of charges, including misappropriation of public funds, abuse of public funds and influence trafficking.

It was a sign that the prosecutor's office intends to question others, enlarging the circle of those who risk being charged and adding new investigators, an official in the prosecutor's office said, refusing to state how many people are concerned.

Fillon has denied any wrongdoing and vowed to carry on his campaign amid the probe. He said at one point that he would end his presidential bid if charged.

France's already unpredictable presidential campaign plunged into uncertainty when the national financial prosecutor's office opened its preliminary investigation last month based on reports by the weekly *Le Canard Enchaîné* about the parliamentary jobs. The decision to move forward and expand the investigation risked casting new doubt on the viability of Fillon's candidacy.

The investigation tarnished the clean-hands image of Fillon, a former prime minister, and he has been greeted at some campaign stops with protesters clanging pots and pans. Far-right leader Marine Le Pen, who has been topping polls, is embroiled in her own corruption scandals, including one involving parliamentary aides, but her candidacy has not suffered.

However, Fillon's lawyers put an upbeat spin on the development. They called the move "logical," saying in a statement that it shows that the financial prosecutor's office "was unable to show the reality of the infractions."

"We don't doubt that at the end of a calm procedure, with independent judges, the innocence of Francois and Penelope Fillon will at last be recognized," the statement said.

Fillon's lawyers, Antonin Levy and Pierre Cornut Gentile, had argued from the start that the financial prosecutors had no legal competence in the case. They now have access to the files.

Fillon admits that he hired his wife and children as parliamentary aides, a practice that is legal in France. However, there are suspicions that neither his wife Penelope nor a son and daughter actually worked for the pay.

The announcement came in the midst of a Fillon campaign rally Friday in Maisons-Alfort, outside Paris.

"If I am attacked, so relentlessly attacked, it is because I clash with the spineless consensus that only likes the right when it walks in the shadows," Fillon told the crowd, suggesting that his legal troubles were part of a bid to bring him down.

The statement by prosecutors attributed the decision to open a judicial investigation in part to the long time period covered in the case.

Since the scandal erupted, centrist presidential candidate Emmanuel Macron and Le Pen, the far-right leader, have moved ahead of Fillon in the polls for France's two-round, April 23-May 7 presidential election.

Le Pen is embroiled in two financial probes, one concerning a financing scheme for her National Front party and the other ilined to aides in the European Parliament.

Her chief of staff, Catherine Grisset, was handed preliminary charges of breach of trust after being questioned on Wednesday. Le Pen refused to appear for questioning before an investigating judge, receiving reprimands from Socialist Prime Minister Bernard Cazeneuve and political opponents on the right. Her

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bodyguard, who once served as her aide for several months, was questioned and released.

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Saturday, Feb. 25, the 56th day of 2017. There are 309 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Feb. 25, 1913, the 16th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, giving Congress the power to levy and collect income taxes, was declared in effect by Secretary of State Philander Chase Knox.

On this date:

In 1836, inventor Samuel Colt patented his revolver.

In 1905, the Upton Sinclair novel "The Jungle" was first published in serial form by the Appeal to Reason newspaper.

In 1922, French serial killer Henri Landru, convicted of murdering 10 women and the son of one of them, was executed in Versailles (vehr-SY').

In 1940, a National Hockey League game was televised for the first time by New York City station W2XBS as the New York Rangers defeated the Montreal Canadiens, 6-2, at Madison Square Garden.

In 1956, Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev harshly criticized the late Josef Stalin in a speech before a Communist Party congress in Moscow.

In 1957, the Supreme Court, in *Butler v. Michigan*, overturned a Michigan statute making it a misdemeanor to sell books containing obscene language that would tend to corrupt "the morals of youth." Chicago gangster George "Bugs" Moran, a rival of Al Capone, died in prison at age 63.

In 1964, Eastern Airlines Flight 304, a DC-8, crashed shortly after taking off from New Orleans International Airport, killing all 58 on board. Muhammad Ali (then known as Cassius Clay) became world heavyweight boxing champion as he defeated Sonny Liston in Miami Beach.

In 1977, the ice hockey comedy "Slap Shot" starring Paul Newman was released by Universal Pictures.

In 1986, President Ferdinand Marcos fled the Philippines after 20 years of rule in the wake of a tainted election; Corazon Aquino assumed the presidency.

In 1991, during the Persian Gulf War, 28 Americans were killed when an Iraqi Scud missile hit a U.S. barracks in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia.

In 1994, an American-born Jewish settler opened fire with an automatic rifle inside the Tomb of the Patriarchs in the West Bank, killing 29 Muslims before he was beaten to death by worshippers.

In 1997, a jury in Media, Pennsylvania, convicted chemical fortune heir John E. du Pont of third-degree murder, deciding he was mentally ill when he shot and killed world-class wrestler David Schultz. (Du Pont died in prison in Dec. 2010 while serving a 13- to 30-year sentence; he was 72.)

Ten years ago: A female suicide bomber triggered a ball bearing-packed charge, killing at least 41 people at a mostly Shiite college in Baghdad. In Detroit, Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan stressed religious unity during what was billed as his final major speech, saying the world was at war because Christians and Muslims were divided. "The Departed" won best picture at the Academy Awards; its director, Martin Scorsese, won an Oscar on his sixth nomination.

Five years ago: A gunman killed two American military advisers with shots to the back of the head inside Afghanistan's heavily guarded Interior Ministry as protests raged for a fifth day over the burning of Qurans at a U.S. army base. Lynn D. "Buck" Compton, 90, a veteran whose World War II exploits were depicted in the television miniseries "Band of Brothers," died in Burlington, Washington.

One year ago: Brawling from the get-go, a fiery Marco Rubio went after Donald Trump during their Republican debate in Houston, lacerating the front-runner's position on immigration, his privileged background, his speaking style and more; Ted Cruz piled on, too, questioning Trump's conservative credentials. A gunman stormed into a Hesston, Kansas, factory and shot 17 people, killing three, before being shot dead by police.

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Today's Birthdays: Actor Tom Courtenay is 80. Former CBS newsman Bob Schieffer is 80. Actress Diane Baker is 79. Actress Karen Grassle is 75. Humorist Jack Handey is 68. Movie director Neil Jordan is 67. Rock musician Dennis Diken (The Smithereens) is 60. Rock singer-musician Mike Peters (The Alarm; Big Country) is 58. Actress Veronica Webb is 52. Actor Alexis Denisof is 51. Actress Tea (TAY'-ah) Leoni is 51. Comedian Carrot Top is 50. Actress Lesley Boone is 49. Actor Sean Astin is 46. Singer Daniel Powter is 46. Latin singer Julio Iglesias Jr. is 44. Rhythm-and-blues singer Justin Jeffre is 44. Rock musician Richard Liles is 44. Actor Anson Mount is 44. Comedian-actress Chelsea Handler is 42. Actress Rashida Jones is 41. Country singer Shawna Thompson (Thompson Square) is 39. Actor Justin Berfield is 31. Actors James and Oliver Phelps ("Harry Potter" movies) are 31. Rock musician Erik Haager (Carolina Liar) is 30.

Thought for Today: "If people behaved in the way nations do they would all be put in straitjackets." — Tennessee Williams, American playwright (born in 1911, died this date in 1983).

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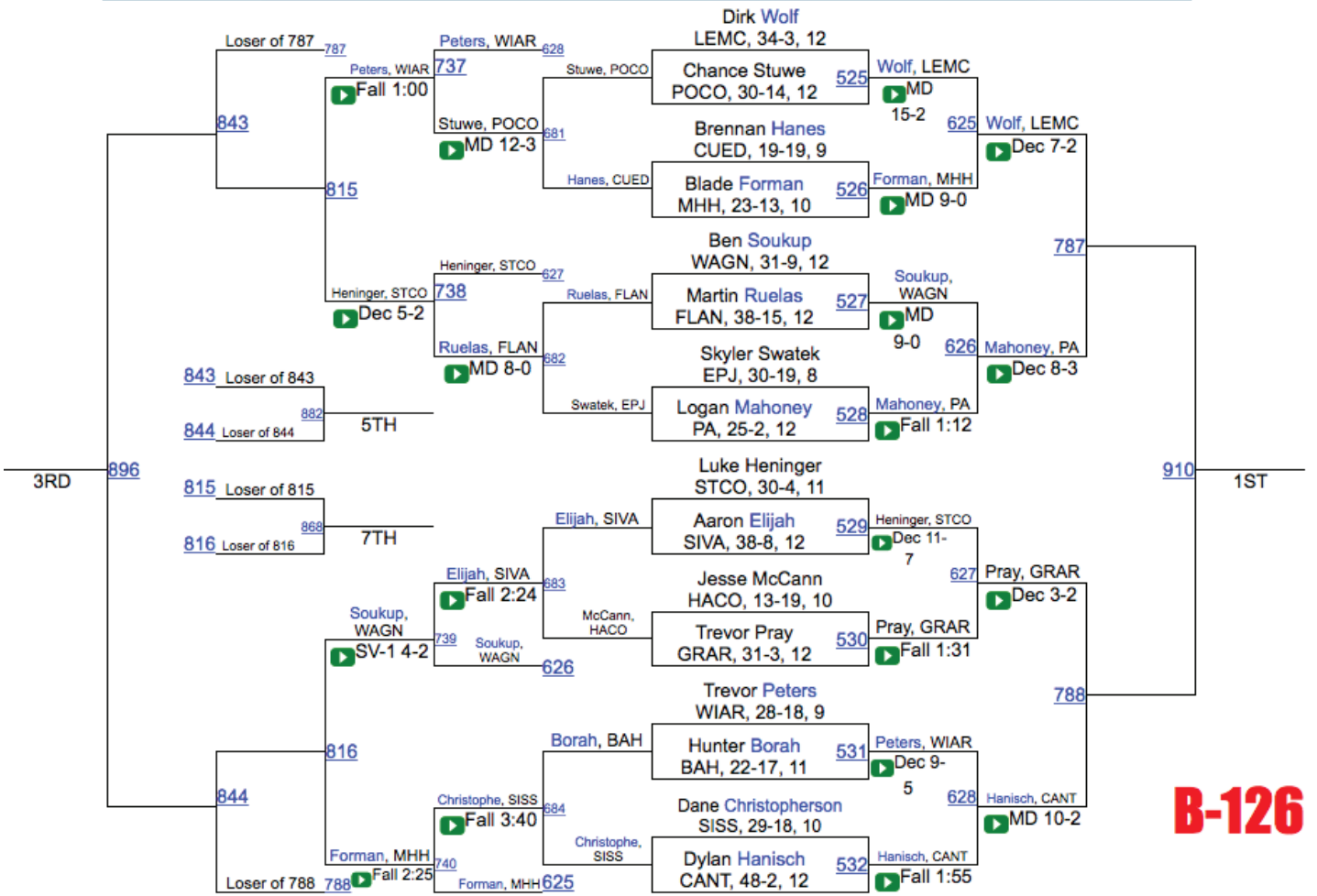
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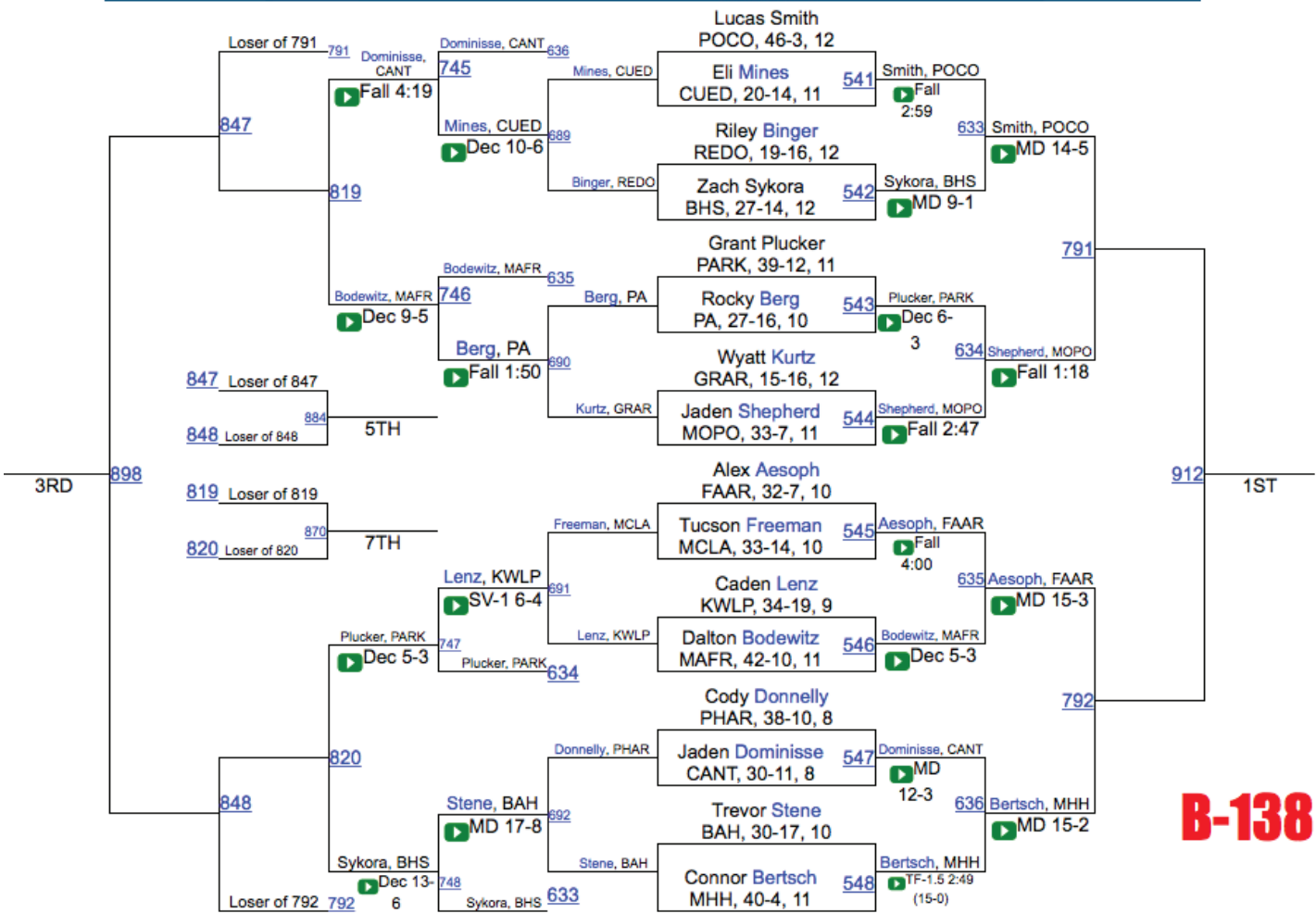
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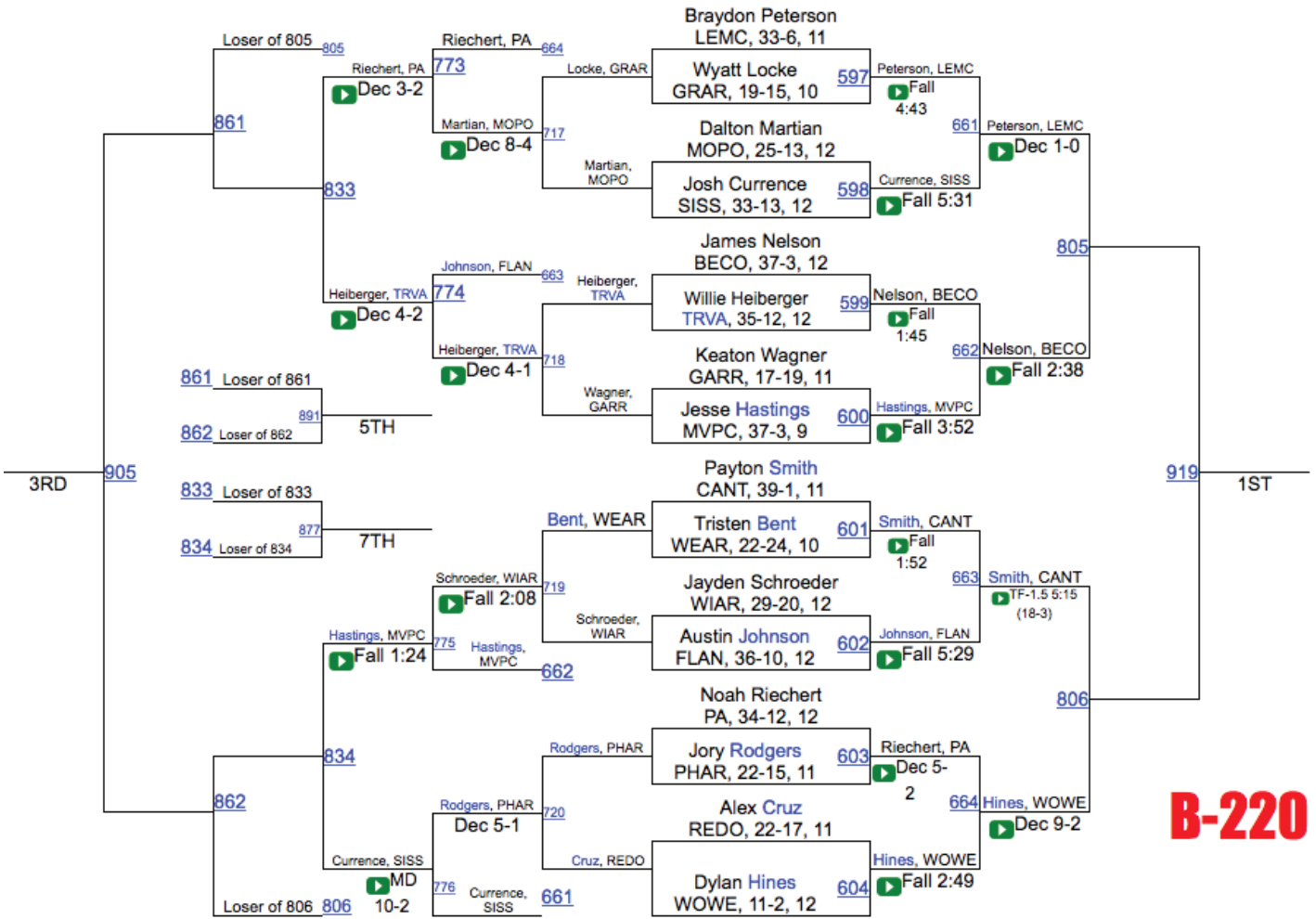
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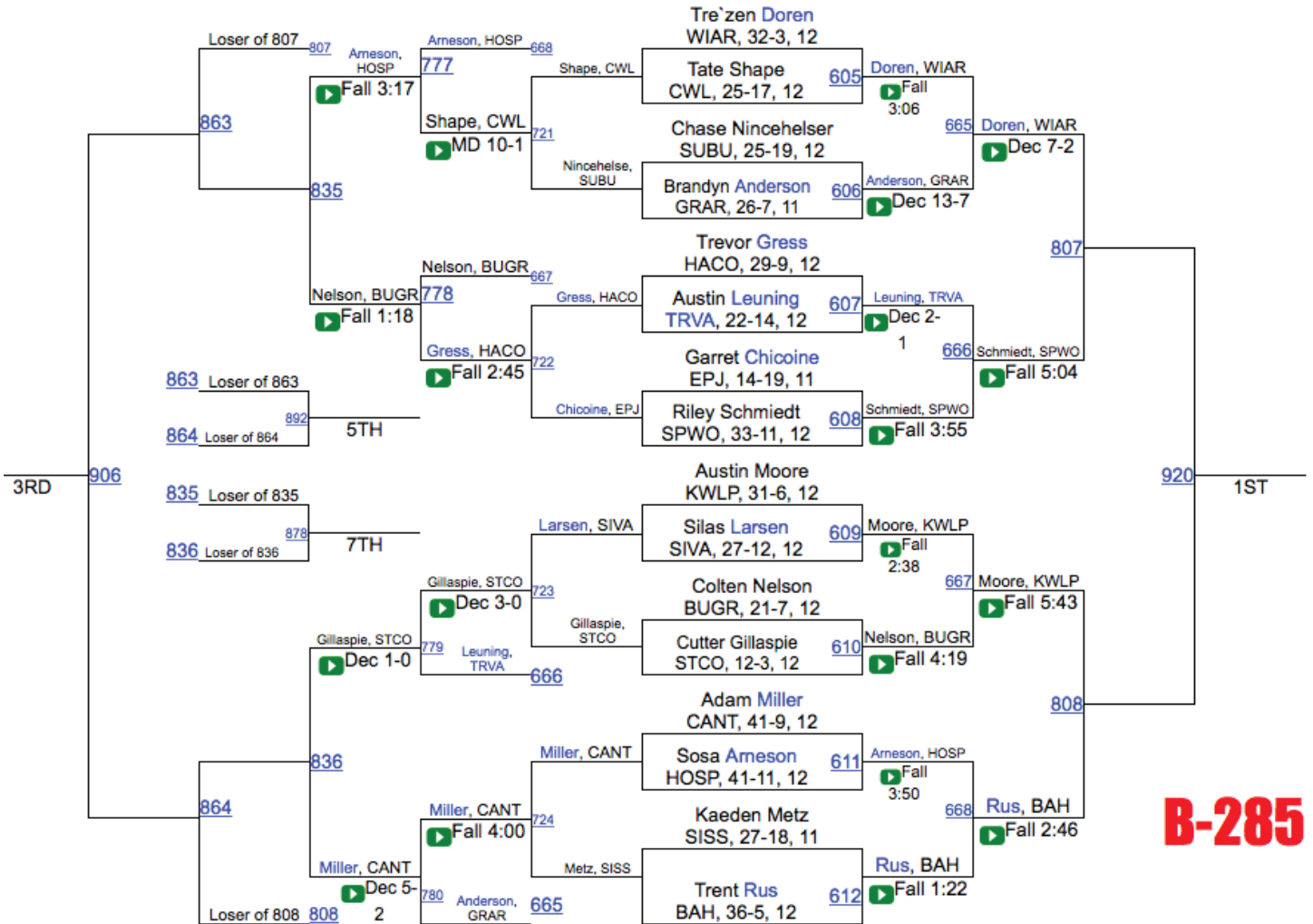
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