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Tuesday, April 4

United Methodist: Bible Study at 10 a.m.
Track at Ipswich at 12:30 p.m.

Senior Menu: Baked pork chop, macaroni salad, squash, pineapple strawberry ambrosia, whole wheat bread.

Wednesday, April 5

St. John's Lutheran: Ladies Aid LWML at 1:30 p.m., Confirmation at 3:45 p.m., Lenten Service at 7 p.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Lenten meal (Sarah Circle serves) at 6 p.m., Lenten Service at 7 p.m.

United Methodist, Groton: Community Coffee Time from 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. with free coffee and rolls; Kid Zone at 3:30 p.m., Confirmation at 6 p.m., Lenten Service at 7 p.m. with coffee and dessert following.

Senior Menu: Oven fried chicken, mashed potatoes and gravy, carrots, broccoli medley, fruit, whole wheat bread.



DAIRY QUEEN HELP WANTED

Dairy Queen in Groton is now hiring. If you're looking for a fun job with part-time hours, flexible scheduling, please stop in for an application.

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

The cardboard/paper
recycling trailer at the school is **Closed**

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The logo for Frost Construction Inc. It features a stylized house icon with two windows to the left of the word 'FROST' in large, bold, red letters. Below 'FROST' is 'CONSTRUCTION INC.' in smaller red letters, and 'GENERAL CONTRACTOR' in white letters inside a black rectangular box. At the bottom, the phone number '605.290.1535' is written in red, and 'custom homes | remodels | additions' is written in black below it.

FROST
CONSTRUCTION INC.
GENERAL CONTRACTOR
605.290.1535
custom homes | remodels | additions

GHS Prom Couples - Part 3



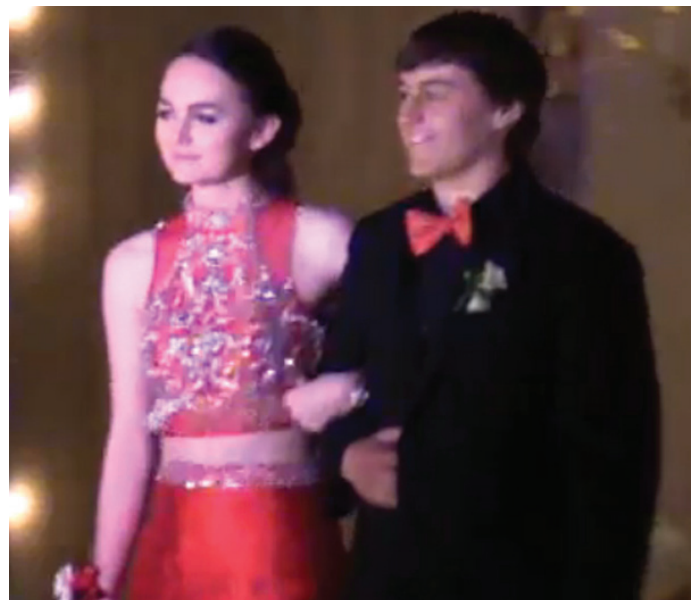
Alex Stange escorted by Turner Webb.



Insa Deden escorted by Korbin Blackmun.



Brenna Johnson escorted by Tevin Abeln.



Gia Gengerke escorted by Peyton Johnson.

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Gia Gengerke escorted by Peyton Johnson.



Katie Koehler escorted by Trevor Pray.



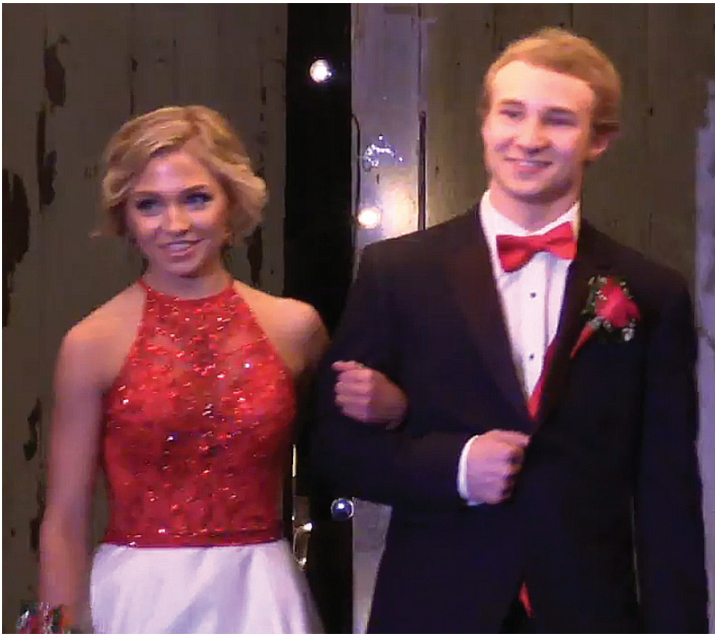
Audrey Wanner escorted by Truitt Rogers.



Shelby Hjernstad escorted by Tate Carda.

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Wyatt Kurtz escorting Megan Ulmer.



Shane Simon escorting Cassie Kulm.



Heather Lone escorted by Brandon Keith.



Brandyn Anderson escorting Kaitlyn Kassube.

Lowary to retire after 36 years

It is now official. City Finance Officer Anita Lowary has submitted her resignation effective June 30, 2017. Mayor Scott Hanlon read her letter of resignation as she will be retiring after 36 years of service to the city.

The Safe Route to School project that the city has been working on for four years is in jeopardy. The sidewalk route runs on the west side of First Street, north of Fourth Avenue to Fifth Avenue, and then on the north side of Fifth Avenue from First Street to Washington Street.

Tim and Faye Berndt and Don Protas came before the council to question the procedure. When they arrived home last week, they discovered pink marks on the tree and questioned what was going on. They said they were never notified of the proposed sidewalk in front of their homes. Two councilmen then chimed in and said they thought the entire project was killed a couple of years ago when everyone fought the city about losing trees because of the sidewalks. Both Berndts and Protas would lose trees. They said they were never notified about the sidewalk project.

The sidewalk is part of the Highway 37 project which has been all engineered and bid and construction will be starting this month. The council decided to try and get the one block west of 37 out of the project and if they are unable to get that done, then they want the whole project scrapped. The sidewalk is paid for with a grant from the State Department of Transportation.

Highway 12 work is scheduled to begin next week and is supposed to be done by July 1. The flashing lights are scheduled to be taken down today (Tuesday) along with six street lights on the north side of US 12. The SD 37 detour will be east on Railroad Avenue to US 12. The state is planning to put down a mat on the road from Sixth Street east to US 12 on the south side of the golf course.

The annual Heartland Consumers Power District meeting is set for April 20 in Madison. Lowary will need to resign from the customer board and she said she would like to get Shawn Lambertz on the board.

Councilman David McGannon proposed to the council about changing the way the city charges for demand to its electrical customers. Under current city ordinance, once a customer reaches 20 KW or 6000 KWH, they are charged a demand rate for a year. The city used to be charged a winter and summer peak load from its wholesalers, but that has been changed several years ago when the city is being charged with a peak demand on a month-to-month basis. McGannon said the city should be doing the same thing to its customers. "It's not fair," he said. Councilman David Blackmun added, "It's time for updating our policy." It will cost the city \$800 to \$1,200 to update its billing program to accommodate the change. The council gave the okay to go ahead with the change in the program. There will be no change in rates until the city gets its report on the rate study which is expected to be done within the next month.

Sump pumps are supposed to be discharged outside and not in the city's sanitary sewer. The council directed Lowary to have an all-call done to remind citizens to get this done.

After an executive session, the council gave first reading on an amendment to the summer salary ordinance.



City Finance Officer Anita Lowary

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Today in Weather History

April 4, 1961: High winds of 40-60mph, with 80-90mph gusts, affected Central and Western South Dakota. The most extensive property damage occurred in the Pierre area. The roof was blown off and one wall damaged at a new motel. One trailer home was blown over, numerous windows and large signboards were destroyed, and roofs sustained damages in Pierre. Total loss estimated \$10,000.

1804 - A large tornado crossed six Georgia counties killing at least eleven persons near Augusta. (David Ludlum)

1933 - Pigeon River Bridge, MN, reported 28 inches of snow, which established the state 24 hour snowfall record. (4th-5th) (The Weather Channel)

1973 - Sandia Crest, NM, reported a snow depth of 95 inches, a record for the state of New Mexico. (The Weather Channel)

1966: One of the strongest tornadoes in Florida's history moved in from the Gulf of Mexico and ripped through Pinellas, Hillsborough, Polk, and Osceola County. Damage was very severe in the towns of Gibsonia and Galloway in Polk County. 11 people were killed and 350 were injured. The tornado was classified as F4.

1977: A Southern Airways DC-9 jet crashed near New Hope, Georgia, after being struck by large hail. The hail and associated heavy precipitation caused the engines to flame out. Seventy-two people (including nine on the ground) died.

1983 - Colorado was in the midst of a three day winter storm. Buckhorn Mountain, located west of Fort Collins, received 64 inches of snow. (Storm Data)

1987 - Rains of five to eight inches drenched eastern New York State, and ten persons were killed in a bridge collapse over Schoharie Creek. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)


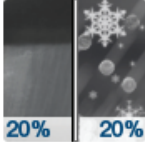





1988 - Sunny and warm weather prevailed across the nation. Fort Smith AR reported a record high of 90 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather from the Lower Mississippi Valley to the Southern Appalachians. The thunderstorms spawned seventeen tornadoes, including one which caused two million dollars damage at Baldwin AL. Thunderstorm winds gusted to 90 mph at Bremen GA. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

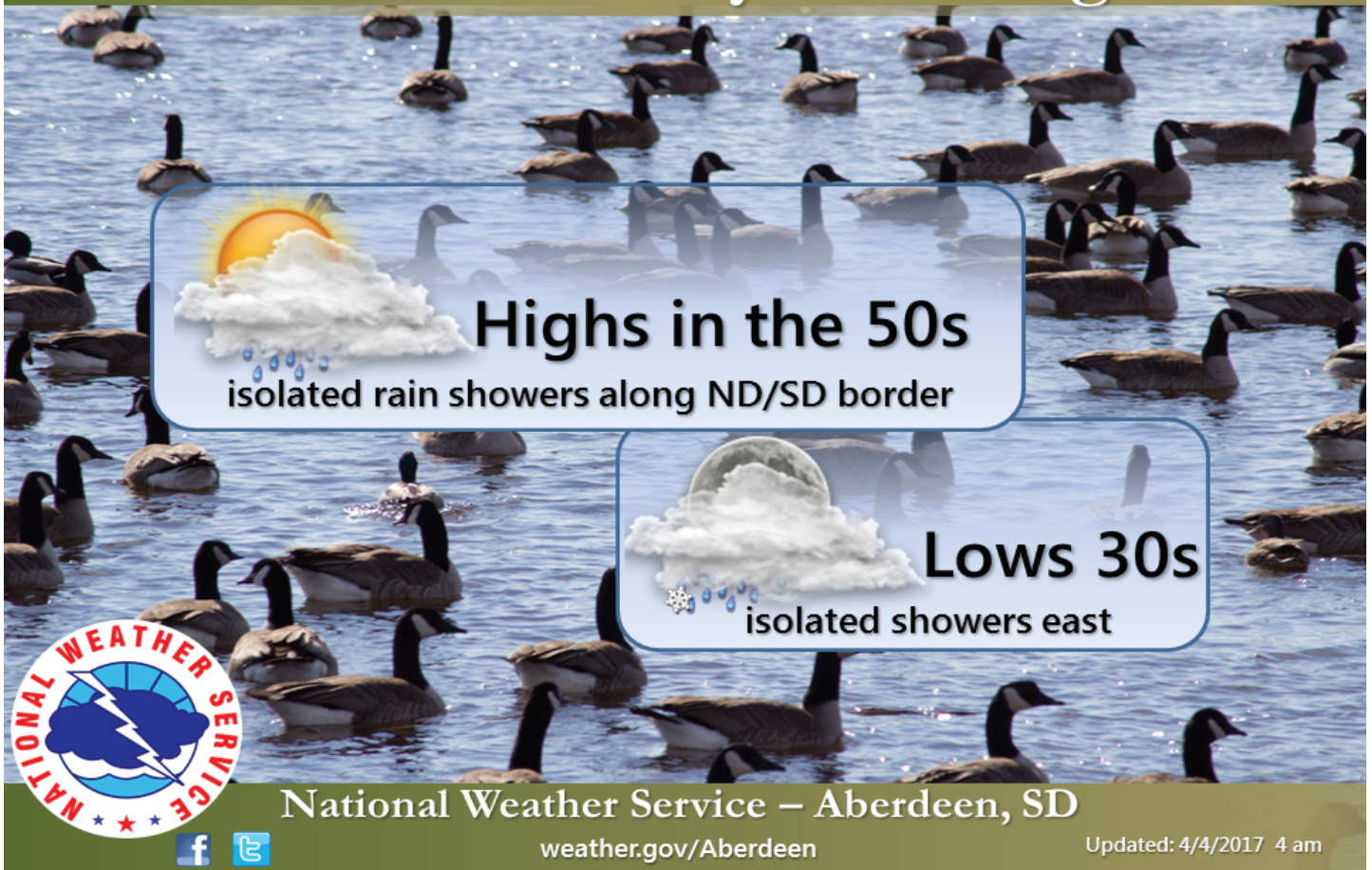
1990 - A deep low pressure system in northern New York State brought heavy snow to parts of western and central New York during the day. The snowfall total of 5.8 inches at Buffalo was a record for the date, and 9.5 inches was reported at Rochester. Snowfall totals ranged up to 11 inches at Warsaw. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)


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Today	Tonight	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday
						
Partly Sunny	Isolated Showers then Slight Chance Wintry Mix	Slight Chance Wintry Mix then Isolated Showers	Mostly Clear	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny
High: 59 °F	Low: 34 °F	High: 53 °F	Low: 28 °F	High: 57 °F	Low: 33 °F	High: 67 °F

Forecast for Today and Tonight:



 **Highs in the 50s**
isolated rain showers along ND/SD border

 **Lows 30s**
isolated showers east



National Weather Service – Aberdeen, SD
weather.gov/Aberdeen Updated: 4/4/2017 4 am

Published on: 04/04/2017 at 5:00AM

Highs will remain in the 50s today and Wednesday, with lows in the 30s. Only limited moisture and an upper level disturbance will combine to bring isolated rain showers the region through Wednesday. They will be primarily along the North Dakota/South Dakota border this afternoon, then over eastern South Dakota tonight into Wednesday. A few flakes of snow could mix in late tonight into Wednesday morning. Otherwise, a significant warm up is in store for the end of the week into the weekend!

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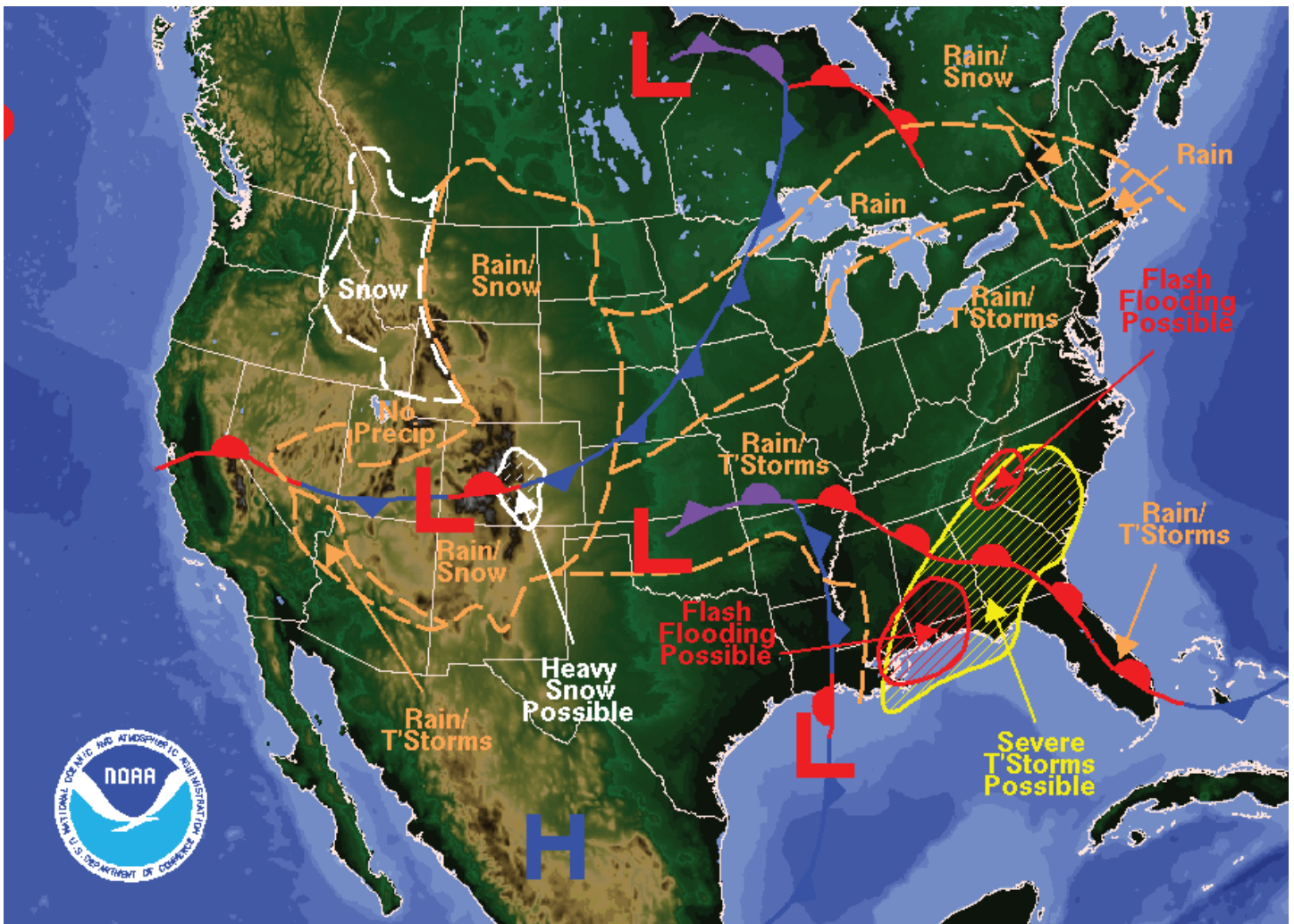
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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 57.2 F at 4:08 PM
Low Outside Temp: 40.9 F at 7:48 AM
High Gust: 24.0 Mph at 12:47 PM
Snow: Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 90° in 1921
Record Low: 5° in 1920
Average High: 51°F
Average Low: 27°F
Average Precip in April.: 0.18
Precip to date in April.: 0.00
Average Precip to date: 2.36
Precip Year to Date: 0.59
Sunset Tonight: 8:06 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:05 a.m.



Weather Forecast for Mon, Apr 03, 2017, issued 4:42 AM EDT
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by McReynolds based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts

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"IT MAY BE MY LAST"

It began as a day like any other day. James Galway, a brilliant flutist, was happily walking to his morning rehearsal. While crossing a street, a speeding motorcyclist hit him and shattered the bones in both of his legs and one arm.

He was rushed to the hospital and the orthopedic surgeons immediately began a lengthy operation as they attempted to repair the damage. Unfortunately, the bones did not heal as quickly or properly as they had anticipated. As a result, he had to remain in the hospital for many months. He once said, "It took quite a while to pick up the pieces."

Upon his release from the hospital and while he was still recovering from the accident he is quoted as saying, "I decided from this moment on I will play every concert, record every album, give every performance and live every day as though 'it may be my last.'" Someone who knew him said that his new goal in life was to "make sure that every time he played, his performance would be as near to perfection as God wanted it to be!"

No doubt that is what Paul had in mind when he wrote, "Whatever you may do, do all to the glory and honor of God!"

There is a two-fold implication here: Whatever we do is a choice. And with each choice is an opportunity to bring honor and glory to God. So, not only are our choices critical but that Christ Himself is exalted in the things we do.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, guide us in our choices and make us conscious of whatever we do, knowing that we are always representing You by the way we live. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: 1 Corinthians 10:31 Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

News from the Associated Press

Fire destroys longtime restaurant in community of Menno

MENNO, S.D. (AP) — Fire destroyed a restaurant in Menno that also housed the town's elderly nutrition program.

The Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan reports (<http://bit.ly/2nXMEYs>) the blaze at the Open Door Cafe was reported about 3 a.m. Monday. Firefighters weren't able to save the structure that dates back at least six decades, but they did save two nearby businesses.

The restaurant also hosted community functions, served as a gathering spot for area residents and served the community's Senior Meals program. About 650 people live in the Hutchinson County community.

There was no immediate word on a cause. State and federal fire officials are helping in the investigation.

Information from: Yankton Press and Dakotan, <http://www.yankton.net/>

Police search for man after homicide in Sioux Falls

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Police are searching for a man they consider a person of interest following a homicide at an apartment in Sioux Falls.

Sioux Falls police say the victim has been identified as 33-year-old Alicia Rhae Jumping Eagle.

Police are looking for 43-year-old Irving Duane Jumping Eagle. He is described as five-feet-nine inches tall, one hundred and ninety pounds, with a shaved head. Irving was last seen at approximately 1:00 p.m. Monday at a gas station near Streeter, North Dakota. He was driving a black 2007 Pontiac Grand Prix with South Dakota license plates 1V8805.

Anyone with information is asked to notify Sioux Falls police.

Police identify 5 children killed in Spearfish house fire

SPEARFISH, S.D. (AP) — Police have released the names of five children killed in a Spearfish house fire over the weekend.

The victims are tentatively identified as 6-year-old Phibie Joyce Moyer, 7-year-old Clinton James Johnson, 8-year-old Rhylin Zane Gee, 9-year-old Justice Lillian Gene Roden and her 11-year-old sister, Tanlynn Crystal Rain Roden. Police say the 6-year-old girl was from Sturgis and the other four children lived in Spearfish.

Investigators say the victims were all found together in an upstairs bedroom. Some adults who tried to rescue them were taken to a Spearfish hospital for treatment of smoke inhalation.

The cause of the fire remains under investigation. Police Lt. Boyd Dean said there was no immediate indication of anything criminal.

A candlelight vigil is planned for Tuesday night at the location of the fire.

The United Methodist Church in Spearfish is acting as a drop-off point for donations.

This story has been corrected to correct 8-year-old boy's first name to 'Rhylin' instead of 'Rylan,' per police.

Report: Pine beetle epidemic in Spearfish now over

SPEARFISH, S.D. (AP) — A 2016 report from the Black Hills National Forest indicates that the mountain pine beetle that ravaged most of the Black Hills is history.

The study on last year's forest health was released Friday and shows that over 94 percent of studied areas had low beetle infestation — less than three trees per acre, the Black Hills Pioneer (<http://bit.ly/2n4Bwdx>) reported.

Forest official Scott Jacobson said that while there are some areas with high beetle activity, the overall forest is in good condition.

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"I am thankful the hard work by our Forest Service employees, our partners and conservation leaders has paid off," forest supervisor Mark Van Every said. "I appreciate the work by all and look forward to working together to make the forest more resilient into the future."

The report said that out of the forest's about 1.2 million acres, approximately 2,100 acres saw trees fading from the beetles. About 15,000 acres were noted the previous year.

Neiman Timber Company resource forester Paul Pierson said the report displays the years of hard work done on the park. He said the support from local, state and federal lawmakers and officials for the logging and timber industry has been tremendous.

"That really speaks to why we were able to be so effective," Pierson said.

The most recent epidemic of the beetle, native to the Black Hills, may have been the worst, lasting for about 20 years. The first recorded epidemic in the Black Hills was from the late 1890s to the early 1900s.

Information from: Black Hills Pioneer, <http://www.bhpioneer.com>

Midwest economic survey index slips but still called healthy

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Economic conditions in nine Midwest and Plains states remains healthy, despite a slight slip in a monthly survey of business supply managers, an economist said in a report released Monday.

The Mid-America Business Conditions Index report said the overall economic index for the region dropped to 60.1 in March from 60.5 in February. It's the first index decline in five months.

However, "the overall index over the past several months indicates a healthy regional manufacturing economy and points to positive growth for both manufacturing and nonmanufacturing through the third quarter of this year," said Creighton University economist Ernie Goss, who oversees the survey.

The survey results are compiled into a collection of indexes ranging from zero to 100. Survey organizers say any score above 50 suggests growth. A score below that suggests decline. The survey covers Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma and South Dakota.

Economic optimism remained high, although the index declined slightly to 70.2 in March from 71.3 in February.

The jobs outlook was among the encouraging signs. The March employment index soared to 62.6 from February's 55.6.

"This is the highest employment gauge recorded since May of 2006," Goss said. "Even though the non-manufacturing sector of the regional economy continues to outperform the manufacturing sector, that gap is closing."

The regional new export orders index fell to a still healthy 61.6 last month from 63.6 in February, and the import index climbed to 62.8 from February's 54.1.

"An expanding regional economy pushed buying from abroad higher for the month," Goss said. "Recent declines in the value of the U.S. dollar and expanding global economic conditions have stimulated new export orders for the month."

Drunken driver crashes truck into Sioux Falls living room

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A 70-year-old man is accused of driving under the influence after allegedly crashing his pickup truck into the living room of a Sioux Falls home.

The crash happened about 6 p.m. Sunday. Police say the driver suffered minor injuries. No one inside the home was hurt.

Authorities say the driver also damaged a tree and a stop sign. He was arrested on a second-offense DUI charge.

Flood-stricken city in Colombia mourns as death toll climbs

By ALBA TOBELLA, Associated Press

MOCOA, Colombia (AP) — Lines of people quietly walked the streets of Mocoa, followed by hearses carrying coffins to a cemetery where open graves waited.

The survivors of the deadly flood that washed through this city in southern Colombia were burying their loved ones Monday after authorities began to release the remains recovered from a disaster that has shaken the country.

Colombian authorities said at least 273 people were killed when rivers surrounding Mocoa overflowed and sent a wall of water and debris surging through the city over the weekend. The death toll was expected to rise since many more were missing and bodies are still being found.

Danilo Garzon Garcia, a 22-year-old resident of the city, had spent the previous day searching with other family members for his young sister. They finally found her body at the local hospital, able to recognize her battered remains because of her underwear.

"It is better this way, better to know," Garzon said as he walked alongside the car carrying her body to the cemetery. "At least we know where she is."

The Colombian Red Cross said it has received 374 requests for help from families unable to locate loved ones, people whose whereabouts were still unknown three days after the disaster.

Much of Mocoa was still strewn with rocks, tree limbs, and brown muck. Search and rescue teams continued to probe piles of debris whenever someone heard a possible sound of movement. Many in this city of around 40,000 people still seemed in shock from the flood, which poured through the town after a punishing rainfall as people slept late Friday night and early Saturday.

"We do not like to create false expectations but where there is a possibility of life we will do everything possible," said Carlos Ivan Marquez, director of Colombia's National Unit of Disaster and Risk Management.

Many victims were young like Garzon's 14-year-old sister. "She had gone to sleep at a friend's house. When we got to where the house was we didn't find anyone," he said.

As he walked calmly in the funeral procession, his mother sobbed and screamed in grief: "Leidy! What did you leave me? Leidy, my girl." Her son then put his arm around her as they made their way to the cemetery.

President Juan Manuel Santos and other officials pledged emergency relief and said that Mocoa would be rebuilt, including a new water system to replace the one damaged in the flood and new homes for those in the 17 neighborhoods hit hardest by the surging water. He said he had spoken by phone with U.S. President Donald Trump, who promised assistance, as have other nations including China and Venezuela.

Santos also declared an "economic, social and ecological emergency," a designation intended to speed reconstruction efforts.

"We are not going to stop until everyone affected by this natural disaster receives help," Marquez said.

Associated Press writer Cesar Garcia contributed from Bogota, Colombia.

Suspected Syria gas attack kills dozens, including children

By PHILIP ISSA and SARAH EL DEEB, Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — A suspected chemical attack in a town in Syria's rebel-held northern Idlib province killed dozens of people on Tuesday, opposition activists said, describing the attack as among the worst in the country's six-year civil war.

Hours later, a small field hospital in the region was struck and destroyed, according to a civil defense worker in the area. There was no information if anyone was killed in that attack.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitoring group put the death toll from the gas attack at 58, saying there were 11 children among the dead. Meanwhile, the Idlib Media Center said

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dozens of people had been killed.

The media center published footage of medical workers appearing to intubate an unresponsive man stripped down to his underwear and hooking up a little girl foaming at the mouth to a ventilator. It was not immediately clear if all those killed died from suffocation or were struck by other airstrikes occurring in the area around the same time.

It was the third claim of a chemical attack in just over a week in Syria. The previous two were reported in Hama province, in an area not far from Khan Sheikhoun, the site of Tuesday's alleged attack.

Tuesday's reports came on the eve of a major international meeting in Brussels on the future of Syria and the region, to be hosted by the EU's High Representative Federica Mogherini.

There was no comment from the government in Damascus in the immediate aftermath of the attack, which activists said was the worst since the 2013 toxic gas attack on the Damascus suburb of Ghouta that killed hundreds of civilians. That attack, which a U.N. report said was an attack by toxic sarin gas, was the worst in Syria's civil war.

In the wake of the 2013 attack, President Bashar Assad agreed to a Russia-sponsored deal to destroy his chemical arsenal and joined the Chemical Weapons Convention. His government declared a 1,300-ton stockpile of chemical weapons and so-called precursor chemicals that can be used to make weapons amid international outrage at a nerve gas attack on the outskirts of Damascus.

Those weapons have been destroyed, but member states of the OPCW have repeatedly questioned whether Assad declared everything in 2013. The widely available chemical chlorine was not covered in the 2013 declaration and activists say they have documented dozens of cases of chlorine gas attacks since then.

The Syrian government has consistently denied using chemical weapons and chlorine gas, accusing the rebels of deploying it in the war instead.

Tarik Jasarevic, spokesman for the World Health Organization in Geneva, said in an e-mailed statement that the agency is contacting health providers from Idlib to get more information about Tuesday's incident.

The Syrian American Medical Society, which supports hospitals in opposition-held territory, said it had sent a team of inspectors to Khan Sheikhoun before noon and an investigation was underway.

The Syrian activists claimed the attack was caused by an airstrike carried out either by Syrian government or Russian warplanes. Makeshift hospitals soon crowded with people suffocating, they said.

Mohammed Hassoun, a media activist in nearby Sarmin — also in Idlib province where some of the critical cases were transferred — said the hospital there had been equipped to deal with such chemical attacks because the town was struck in one chemical attack, early on in the Syrian uprising.

The wounded have been "distributed around in rural Idlib," he told The Associated Press by phone. "There are 18 critical cases here. They were unconscious, they had seizures and when oxygen was administered, they bled from the nose and mouth."

Hassoun, who is documenting the attack for the medical society, said the doctors there have said it is likely more than one gas. "Chlorine gas doesn't cause such convulsions," he said, adding that doctors suspect sarin was used.

Hussein Kayal, a photographer for the Idlib Media Center, said he was awoken by the sound of a bomb blast around 6:30 a.m. When he arrived at the scene there was no smell, he said.

He found entire families inside their homes, lying on the floor, eyes wide open and unable to move. Their pupils were constricted. He put on a mask, he said. Kayal said he and other witnesses took victims to an emergency room, and removed their clothes and washed them in water.

He said he felt a burning sensation in his fingers and was treated for that.

A Turkey-based Syrian man whose niece, her husband and one-year-old daughter were among those killed, said the warplanes struck early, as residents were still in their beds. He spoke on condition of anonymity because he feared for the safety of family members back in Syria.

The province of Idlib is almost entirely controlled by the Syrian opposition. It is home to some 900,000 displaced Syrians, according to the United Nations. Rebels and opposition officials have expressed concerns that the government is planning to mount a concentrated attack on the crowded province.

The Syrian Coalition, an opposition group based outside the country, said government planes fired mis-

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siles carrying poisonous gases on Khan Sheikhoun, describing the attack as a "horrifying massacre."

Photos and video emerging from Khan Sheikhoun, which lies south of the city of Idlib, the provincial capital, show limp bodies of children and adults. Some are seen struggling to breathe; others appear foaming at the mouth.

A medical doctor going by the name of Dr. Shajul Islam for fears for his own safety said his hospital in Idlib province received three victims, all with narrow, pinpoint pupils that did not respond to light. He published video of the patients on his Twitter account.

Pinpoint pupils, breathing difficulties, and foaming at the mouth are symptoms commonly associated with toxic gas exposure.

The opposition's Civil Defense search-and-rescue group, which released photos showing paramedics washing down victims, has not published a casualty toll.

The activist-run Assi Press published video of paramedics carrying victims from the scene by a pickup truck. The victims were stripped down to their underwear. Many appeared unresponsive.

The New York-based Human Rights Watch has accused the Syrian government of conducting at least eight chemical attacks using chlorine gas on opposition-controlled residential areas during the final months in the battle for Aleppo last year that killed at least nine civilians and injured 200.

A joint investigation by the United Nations and the international chemical weapons watchdog determined the Syrian government was behind at least three attacks in 2014 and 2015 involving chlorine gas and that the Islamic State group was responsible for at least one, involving mustard gas.

Officials: St. Petersburg subway blast was suicide attack

By IRINA TITOVA and NATALIYA VASILYEVA, Associated Press

ST. PETERSBURG, Russia (AP) — A suicide bomber was behind a blast on the St. Petersburg subway that killed 14 people, Russian investigators said Tuesday, while authorities in the Central Asian nation of Kyrgyzstan identified a suspect as a Kyrgyz-born Russian citizen.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the Monday afternoon attack, which came while President Vladimir Putin was visiting the city, Russia's second biggest and Putin's hometown.

Russia's health minister on Tuesday raised the death toll from 11 to 14 and said 49 people are still hospitalized. City Hall authorities said there were several foreign nationals among those killed and injured but would not offer detail. The foreign ministry of the Central Asian nation of Kazakhstan said one of its citizens has been killed in the attack.

Residents have been bringing flowers to the stations near where the blast occurred. Every corner and window-sill at the ornate, Soviet-built Sennaya Square station on Tuesday was covered with red and white carnations.

Russia's top investigative body said in a statement that investigators have identified a man whose body parts were found on the train and who is suspected to be a suicide bomber. Kyrgyzstan's State Committee for National Security identified one suspect as Kyrgyz-born Russian national Akbarzhon Dzhalilov, aged between 21 and 22. It was not immediately clear if the two statements related to the same person.

The Interfax news agency on Monday said authorities believe the suspect was linked to radical Islamic groups and carried the explosive device onto the train in a backpack.

The entire subway system in St. Petersburg, a city of 5 million, was shut down and evacuated before partial service resumed six hours later. Typically crowded during the rush hour, the subway on Tuesday morning looked almost deserted as many residents opted for buses.

"First, I was really scared," said Viktoria Prishchepova who did take the subway. "I didn't want to go anywhere on the metro because I was nervous. Everyone was calling their loved ones yesterday, checking if they were OK and how everyone was going to get home."

Monday's explosion occurred as the train traveled between stations on one of the city's north-south lines. The driver appeared in front of reporters on Tuesday looking tired but not visibly shaken by the events of the previous day.

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Alexander Kavernin, 50, who has worked on the subway for 14 years, said he heard the sound of a blast while his train was running, called security and carried on to the next station as the emergency instructions prescribe.

"I had no time to think about fear at that moment," he said.

The decision to keep moving was praised by authorities as aiding evacuation efforts and reducing the danger to passengers who would have had to walk along the electrified tracks.

Oleg Alexeyev, 53, who trains sniffer dogs for the police, went to the Technological Institute station Tuesday morning to lay flowers in memory of those who died nearby.

"I traveled on the same route this morning just to see how it felt and think about life. You begin to feel the thin line about life and death," he said.

Four stations on the subway were closed again Tuesday due to a bomb threat, but later reopened.

People from Kyrgyzstan and other Central Asian former Soviet republics are common sights in St. Petersburg, home to a large diaspora of migrants who flee poverty and unemployment in their home countries for jobs in Russia. While most Central Asian migrants in Russia have work permits or work illegally, thousands of them have received Russian citizenship in the past decades.

Russian authorities have rejected calls to impose visas on Central Asian nationals, hinting that having millions of jobless men across the border from Russia would be a bigger security threat.

Patriarch Kirill, head of the Russian Orthodox Church, led a service at Moscow's main cathedral on Tuesday for those killed in the blast.

"This terrorist act is a threat to all of us, all our nation," he said quoted by the Interfax news agency.

In the past two decades, Russian trains and planes have been frequent targets of attack, usually blamed on Islamic militants. The last confirmed attack was in October 2015 when Islamic State militants downed a Russian airliner heading from an Egyptian resort to St. Petersburg, killing all 224 people on board.

Separately, in the southern Russian city of Astrakhan, two policemen were killed in the early hours on Tuesday in a suspected Islamic militant attack. Alexander Zhilkin, governor of the region, said the attackers are on the run.

Vasilyeva reported from Moscow. Leila Saralayeva in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, and Iuliia Subbotovska in St. Petersburg, Russia, contributed to this report.

10 Things to Know for Today

By The Associated Press

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

1. ST. PETERSBURG SUBWAY DEATH TOLL RISES TO 14

Russian investigators say a suicide bomber was behind the blast and Kyrgyzstan officials identify the suspect as Kyrgyz-born Russian citizen Akbarzhon Dzhililov.

2. SUSPECTED CHEMICAL ATTACK STRIKES SYRIA

Dozens were killed in a town in northern Idlib province, Syrian opposition activists say, describing the attack as among the worst in the country's six-year civil war.

3. SENATE LEADER MAY INVOKE 'NUCLEAR OPTION'

If implemented by Mitch McConnell, it would lower Neil Gorsuch's Supreme Court confirmation threshold to a filibuster-proof simple majority of 51 votes.

4. WHAT HAS BORDER WALL CONTRACTORS CONCERNED

With bids due on the first design contracts, companies are expressing concerns about the security of their workers if they get the potentially lucrative but controversial job.

5. XI-TRUMP SUMMIT: TRADE, TAIWAN AND NORTH KOREA

The meeting later this week in Florida between the U.S. and Chinese leaders will be closely watched for signs of how relations between the world's top two economies will proceed.

6. JORDANIAN KING TO PUSH MIDEAST PEACE WITH TRUMP

King Abdullah II in a visit to the White House this week will relaunch an offer of regional recognition of Israel in exchange for Palestinian statehood.

7. PENCE OFFERS CHANGE TO HEALTH CARE BILL

A participant at the meeting says states would be allowed to apply for a waiver from an "Obamacare" provision that prohibits insurance companies from declining to write policies for people with serious diseases.

8. WHO IS PUSHING UNLIKELY TUITION PLAN FOR IMMIGRANTS

A proposal by Republican lawmakers in Tennessee would allow public colleges to offer in-state tuition rates to students whose parents brought them into the country illegally.

9. VA DEFENDING WORK TO FIX TROUBLED SUICIDE HOTLINE

The VA inspector general had found that nearly a third of calls to the Veterans Crisis Line as recently as November were bounced to backup centers run by an outside contractor.

10. FOR TAR HEELS, REDEMPTION

Justin Jackson delivers the go-ahead three-point play and North Carolina secures its sixth national championship with a 71-65 win over Gonzaga.

AP Exclusive: Border wall contractors brace for hostile site

By ELLIOT SPAGAT, Associated Press

SAN DIEGO (AP) — One potential bidder on President Donald Trump's border wall with Mexico wanted to know if authorities would rush to help if workers came under "hostile attack." Another asked if employees can carry firearms in states with strict gun control laws and if the government would indemnify them for using deadly force.

With bids due Tuesday on the first design contracts, interested companies are preparing for the worst if they get the potentially lucrative job.

A U.S. official with knowledge of the plans who spoke on condition of anonymity because the details haven't been made public said four to 10 bidders are expected to be chosen to build prototypes.

They will be constructed on a roughly quarter-mile (400-meter) strip of federally owned land in San Diego within 120 feet (37 meters) of the border, though a final decision has not been made on the precise spot, the official said. The government anticipates spending \$200,000 to \$500,000 on each prototype.

The Border Patrol and local police would establish a buffer zone around the construction site if necessary, the U.S. official said. The San Diego police and sheriff's departments said Monday they will respect constitutional rights to free speech and assembly for any peaceful, law-abiding protesters.

Enrique Morones, executive director of Border Angels, said his group plans to protest.

"There will be a lot of different activity — protests, prayer vigils — on both sides of the wall," said Morones, whose immigrant advocacy group is based in San Diego. "We pray and hope that they're peaceful."

Michael Evangelista-Ysasaga, chief executive of The Penna Group LLC, a general contractor in Fort Worth, Texas, said he has received about a dozen death threats since publicly expressing interest in bidding, including one from a woman who told him she hired a private investigator to trail him.

Evangelista-Ysasaga said he bid in part because he wants broad immigration reform. Securing the border, he said, is a prerequisite for granting a path to citizenship to millions in the U.S. illegally.

"We didn't enter this lightly," he said. "We looked at it and said we have to be a productive part of the solution."

Building a wall on the Mexican border was a cornerstone of Trump's presidential campaign and a flash-point for his detractors. The multibillion-dollar project along the 2,000-mile border has many outspoken critics, including the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Mexico, which said last week that Mexican companies expressing interest were betraying their country.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection said in a statement that it would pick multiple contractors to build prototypes by around June 1 and will name only the winning bidders. The agency said last month that the

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prototypes should be about 30 feet (9 meters) long and 18 to 30 feet (5.5 to 9 meters) high.

The winning bidders must submit a security plan with details including “fall back positions, evacuation routines and methods, muster area, medical staff members/availability, number of security personnel, qualifications, years of experience, etc. in the event of a hostile attack,” according to the solicitation. A chain-link fence with barbed wire around the construction site is required. The agency said it won’t provide security.

Bidders are also asked to demonstrate experience “executing high-profile, high-visibility and politically contentious” projects.

The agency, responding to questions from companies on a website for government contractors, said the Border Patrol would respond as needed if there is a hostile attack, but companies were responsible for security. The government won’t allow waivers from state gun laws or indemnify companies whose workers use deadly force.

The website for contractors lists more than 200 companies that signed up for email notifications on the design contract but it’s unclear how many of those will apply. Bidders must have done border security or similar projects worth \$25 million in the past five years to qualify.

Ronald Colburn, Border Patrol deputy chief when hundreds of miles of fences were built under President George W. Bush’s administration, said companies should plan on training workers to know when to seek cover and stay put and when to retreat.

“Most of those organizations are probably fairly accustomed to that,” said Colburn, who retired in 2009. “Some of them may be learning for the first time, that kind of risk at the borders.”

Tar Heels get it right this time, bring home the title

By EDDIE PELLIS, AP National Writer

GLENDALE, Ariz. (AP) — For a whole year, the North Carolina Tar Heels wondered if they’d get another chance.

For a whole year, the Tar Heels thought about what might have been.

When Monday night’s slugfest with Gonzaga came to a merciful end, the Heels had all their answers: The national title was theirs, the nets were hanging around their necks, the redemption tour was a success.

Their 71-65 win will not be mistaken for a work of art. But for anyone who bleeds Carolina Blue, it sure was a thing of beauty.

“This is what we worked for,” junior guard Joel Berry II said. “And the ups and downs we’ve had? It’s all worth it.”

The story starts with the downs. When Villanova’s Kris Jenkins hit his 3-pointer at the buzzer to beat Carolina in the 2016 final, coach Roy Williams buckled over like a man who’d just been punched in the gut, put both hands on his knees and tried to figure out to explain it.

“The feeling of inadequacy in the locker room last year is the worst feeling I’ve ever had,” Williams said.

What ensued was a year of working harder, doing more, making sure That didn’t happen again.

With 1:40 left in the final, Justin Jackson took a laser of a pass from Theo Pinson and laid it in while being fouled. He made the free throw, and that 3-point play gave the Tar Heels a 66-65 lead.

Gonzaga didn’t score again, though in a game that left fans from both sides booing a spate of over-officious officiating, the game couldn’t be settled without a controversial (non)call in the last minute.

Leading by 1, and in a scrum under the Carolina basket, Tar Heels forward Kennedy Meeks went to the floor to try to wrestle the ball away from Silas Melson. Refs called a jump ball, and with the possession arrow favoring North Carolina, the Tar Heels converted on an Isaiah Hicks runner to push the lead to 3. Replays and pictures, retweeted and reposted thousands of times on social media, showed Meeks’ right hand touching out of bounds.

But there was no protest, no review.

“Probably on me,” said Gonzaga coach Mark Few, whose first knowledge of the call came in the postgame

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press conference. "From my angle, it didn't look like an out of bounds situation or I would have called a review. That's tough to hear."

Through NCAA spokesman David Worlock, national coordinator of basketball officials JD Collins said the play was not reviewable.

Neither Few nor Williams threw much blame toward the officials, but the refs made this game virtually unwatchable.

They called 27 fouls in the second half and put both teams in the bonus with 13-plus minutes left. They left the big men — Meeks and Gonzaga's 7-footers Przemek Karnowski and Zach Collins — among those languishing on the bench in foul trouble. They stifled any bit of flow that existed in the game and turned it into a review-driven free-throw contest. They brought steady cascades of boos from the crowd of 76,168, as fans from each side took turns protesting the whistles.

"It's a very difficult game to call," said Williams, who has now led the Tar Heels to three of the program's six titles. "I'm sitting over there, I'm not thinking the officials are doing a terrible job. ... I'm thinking our offense stinks."

He had a point.

Carolina shot 35 percent from the field, a percentage point worse than it did in Saturday's semifinal win over Oregon, which stood, for two days, as their worst shooting night in a tournament win since 1967.

Some of the culprits: Berry led the Tar Heels with 22 points but needed 19 shots to get there. Jackson had 16 points but went 0 for 9 from 3-point range. Pinson went 2 for 9.

Gonzaga's numbers were even worse — 20 for 59 for 33.9 percent. Nigel Williams-Goss scored 8 straight points for the Bulldogs to give them their last lead — 65-63 with 1:52 left.

Moments later, Williams-Goss twisted his ankle and neither he nor anyone on his team would score again.

"To be so close for us is a temporarily crushing blow right now," Few said. "But I'm hoping and knowing that perspective will come with time."

At Gonzaga — a program on fantastic footing thanks to two decades' worth of building led by Few — they'll regroup and reload and try to finish the deal next year.

Few, both a coaching and card-playing buddy of Williams, might be tempted to give Ol' Roy a call and ask him how he did it.

"They wanted redemption," Williams explained. "I put it on the locker room up on the board — one of the things we had to be tonight was tough enough. I think this group was tough enough tonight."

For more AP college basketball coverage: <http://collegebasketball.ap.org> and http://twitter.com/AP_Top25

White House officials offer change to health care bill

By ALAN FRAM, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — White House officials made a new offer to conservative House Republicans late Monday on the GOP's failed health care bill, hoping to resuscitate a measure that crashed spectacularly less than two weeks ago.

Vice President Mike Pence and two top White House officials made the offer in a closed-door meeting with members of the House Freedom Caucus, according to a participant. Opposition from the hard-line group, which has around three dozen conservative Republicans, contributed to circumstances that forced House Speaker Paul Ryan to withdraw the bill from a March 24 vote that would have produced a certain defeat.

Under the White House offer, states would be allowed to apply for waivers from several coverage requirements that President Barack Obama's 2010 health care law imposed on insurers.

These include an Affordable Care Act provision prohibiting insurance companies from declining to write policies for people with serious diseases. Conservatives have argued that such requirements have the effect of inflating insurance costs.

Freedom Caucus members said they wanted to see the White House offer in writing — which is expected

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Tuesday — before deciding whether to accept it.

Also at Monday's meeting were White House chief of staff Reince Priebus and budget director Mick Mulvaney. The participant spoke on condition of anonymity to describe the private strategy session.

Another participant — Freedom Caucus chairman Rep. Mark Meadows, R-N.C. — said the group would make no decisions until it reviews the language but called the session a "good meeting" in a text message.

But Meadows also said, "There is no deal in principle" at this time.

It was unclear whether GOP moderates would accept the proposed changes. When Ryan, R-Wis., pulled the legislation from the House last month, he also faced opposition from moderate GOP lawmakers upset that it went too far with cuts in Medicaid coverage for the poor and higher premiums for many low earners and people in their 50s and 60s.

Rep. Tom MacArthur, R-N.J., a leader of the moderate House Tuesday Group, was among moderate lawmakers who met with officials at the White House on Monday, a GOP aide said.

The Freedom Caucus has drawn the most wrath from the White House for its opposition to the bill. Some fellow House Republicans have also criticized members of the conservative group, accusing them of inflexibility that led to the downfall of the bill to replace "Obamacare," a top GOP legislative priority.

Six days after the House bill crashed, Trump tweeted that the Freedom Caucus "will hurt the entire Republican agenda" if they don't start cooperating. He added, "We must fight them" in 2018, a reference to their re-election campaigns.

Several caucus members, who tend to represent safely Republican districts, tweeted back defiantly. But some have stressed a desire to move the legislation along if provisions are added that they believe would contain insurance costs.

VA defending work to fix troubled veteran suicide hotline

By HOPE YEN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Department of Veterans Affairs is telling skeptical members of Congress that it has fixed problems with its suicide hotline that were highlighted in a critical recent internal watchdog report.

A March 20 audit by the VA inspector general had found that nearly a third of calls to the Veterans Crisis Line as recently as November were bounced to back-up centers run by an outside contractor. The rollover calls happen when phone lines are busy, leading to possible waits of 30 minutes or more.

It was unwelcome news for VA Secretary David Shulkin, who has made suicide prevention a signature issue in the troubled agency, riven with scandal since reports of delays in treatment at veterans hospitals last year.

Approximately veterans take their lives each day. On Tuesday, the VA plans to tell the House Veterans Affairs Committee that the most serious issues with the veterans' crisis hotline have been resolved.

Calls to the Veterans Crisis Line that rolled over to backup centers steadily declined from 31 percent in early November, to just 0.1 percent as of March 25, according to internal VA data submitted to Congress and obtained by The Associated Press. That came despite growing workloads in which weekly calls to the hotline jumped from 10,558 in November to 13,966 last month, the VA said.

As recently as mid-December, when the IG was finalizing its audit, the share of rollover calls had declined close to the VA's goal of 10 percent. That figure dropped to less than 1 percent by early January, according to the agency.

The crisis hotline "is the strongest it has been since its inception in 2007," Steve Young, VA's deputy undersecretary for health for operations and management, says in testimony prepared for Tuesday's hearing. He described the hotline in recent months as "offering superior access for veterans during their time of need."

Shulkin, who previously served as VA's top health official, has also described the issue as resolved. "Fixing the Veterans Crisis Line was a critical step in keeping our commitment to veterans," he said in a March 21 statement.

VA inspector general Michael Missal said he cannot confirm the data, but emphasized in prepared testi-

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mony that the Veterans Health Administration had not implemented any of the IG's proposed improvements, dating back to February 2016. The department had previously "concurred" with the report's March 20 findings. "Until VHA implements fully these recommendations, they will continue to have challenges," he said.

Missal also identified fresh problems, such as inadequate procedures to measure the hotline's success in thwarting suicide attempts.

Launched in 2007, the crisis hotline has answered nearly 2.8 million calls and dispatched emergency services more than 74,000 times, figures show. Featured in a documentary that won an Oscar in 2015, it later received negative attention after its former director reported frequent rollovers due to poor work habits. Last year, Congress passed a law requiring that all calls and messages to the hotline be answered in a timely manner.

Responding to the VA's latest data, lawmakers were wary.

Rep. Phil Roe, R-Tennessee, a physician who chairs the House committee, questioned whether the VA intended to fully implement reforms. "There is very clearly a need for more to be done — and soon — so that we can be assured that every veteran or family member who contacts the VCL gets the urgent help he or she needs," he said.

The most recent rollover problems appear to stem from the VA's opening of a second call center last October.

Spurred by veterans' complaints, the IG said the department launched a follow-up review to its February 2016 audit in which the VA promised to make improvements by last September. Instead, it found many rollover calls, due in part to the VA's decision to divert some staff from its upstate New York call center to help train new workers in Atlanta.

The IG suggested the Atlanta center was slow in becoming operational, but the VA says that rollover calls in fact began to fall significantly as workers became trained.

It wouldn't be the first time the VA disagreed with auditors. Both the VA inspector general and the Government Accountability Office previously found the department's figures on wait times for medical care to be misleading, which the VA disputes. The GAO still lists the VA as "high risk" for waste, fraud or mismanagement.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars organization said the latest VA data might be accurate, but said it was worried that the agency sometimes focuses too much on metrics — the number of calls received and handled. It urged better call monitoring to improve training and service.

"The VFW believes that while the number of calls going to backup centers decreasing at such a rapid rate is a positive, it is not a sign of the quality of work being provided," said Kayda Keleher, VFW's legislative associate.

Follow Hope Yen on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/hopeyen1>

Senate begins debate on Gorsuch, headed for showdown

By ERICA WERNER and MARY CLARE JALONICK, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Democrats have secured the votes to block President Donald Trump's Supreme Court nominee under current rules, putting the Senate on a partisan collision course over confirming Neil Gorsuch to a lifetime appointment that could reverberate for decades.

Debate over the 49-year-old appellate judge gets under way in the full Senate on Tuesday, with Republicans and Democrats bitterly divided over the next steps.

While Democrats have the votes for a filibuster, Majority Leader Mitch McConnell is ready to lead the GOP in a unilateral change in a Senate floor procedure so significant that it has been dubbed the "nuclear option." The tactic if invoked would lower the confirmation threshold to a filibuster-proof simple majority of 51 votes in the 100-member Senate rather than the 60 votes currently needed to stop delaying tactics by opponents.

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The likelihood of more partisan wrangling left veteran GOP senators frustrated — and hoping that Democrats would relent in their opposition to the Colorado jurist.

The nuclear option would be “damaging to the Senate, damaging to them and damaging to the country. Maybe a light will come on somewhere,” said Sen. Lamar Alexander, a Tennessee Republican.

After hours of debate Monday, the Judiciary Committee voted 11-9, along party lines, to send Gorsuch’s nomination to the full Senate, where McConnell, R-Ky., has vowed he will be confirmed on Friday.

Sen. Chris Coons of Delaware became the key 41st vote for the Democrats, declaring during a committee debate that Gorsuch’s conservative record showed an activist approach to the law, often in favor of business interests, and that he evaded questions during his confirmation hearings. Coons also said that Republicans’ treatment of former President Barack Obama’s Supreme Court nominee, Merrick Garland, left lasting scars after they denied him so much as a hearing following the death of Justice Antonin Scalia early last year.

“We are at a historic moment in the history of the United States Senate” due to actions by both parties, Coons said. “We have eroded the process for reaching agreement and dishonored our long traditions of acting above partisanship.”

The long-term consequences of the coming confrontation could be profound, as the rules change Republicans intend to enact would apply to future Supreme Court nominees as well, allowing them to be voted onto the court without any input from the minority party. And though predicting a justice’s votes can be difficult, confirmation of the 49-year-old Gorsuch is expected to restore the conservative majority that existed while Scalia was alive and that majority could be expanded in coming decades if Republicans remain in control of the process. Some of the more liberal justices are among the oldest on the court, so more court openings could pop up.

For Republicans and Trump, Gorsuch’s confirmation would be a moment of triumph, a bright spot in a troubled young administration that’s failed on the legislative front with the health care bill and is under investigation over Russia connections. The nomination of Gorsuch, by contrast, has won universal praise from Republicans, some of whom call his appointment Trump’s best move so far as president.

Gorsuch has spent more than a decade on the federal appeals bench in Denver where he’s issued consistently conservative rulings, and he appeared on Trump’s list of potential candidates partly generated by the Federalist Society and Heritage Foundation during the campaign.

Gorsuch’s confirmation would also serve as vindication for McConnell’s strategy of refusing to fill Scalia’s seat last year, instead leaving it open for the next president, even though few imagined then that that person would be Trump.

The showdown over the “nuclear option,” expected on the Senate floor Thursday, is likely to be accompanied by much hand-wringing from senators bemoaning the decay of the chamber’s traditions of bipartisanship and comity.

But both parties are to blame. When the Democrats were in the majority, they removed the 60-vote threshold for nominees to federal benches lower in the judicial system than the Supreme Court. This change came in 2013 as Republicans, who were in the minority at the time, were blocking Obama picks for critical court vacancies. Republicans said at the time that Democrats would come to regret the move.

Gorsuch will be confirmed “and he should be,” John Cornyn of Texas, the No. 2 Senate Republican, said during Monday’s debate. “If Judge Gorsuch is unacceptable to our Democratic colleagues, there will never be a nominee by this president that you will find acceptable. Never.”

Gorsuch now counts 55 supporters in the Senate: the 52 Republicans, along with three moderate Democrats from states Trump won last November — Joe Manchin of West Virginia, Heidi Heitkamp of North Dakota and Joe Donnelly of Indiana. A fourth Senate Democrat, Michael Bennet from Gorsuch’s home state of Colorado, has said he will not join in the filibuster against Gorsuch but has not said how he will vote on final passage.

Democrats claim the Republicans’ treatment of Garland was worse than anything they ever did or are doing, and with Trump in the White House they are under intense pressure from liberal voters to oppose

the president on every front.

Immigrant tuition break gaining support in Tennessee

By JONATHAN MATTISE, Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — A push to offer in-state college tuition rates to students whose parents brought them into the country illegally is picking up unlikely momentum from some Republicans in Tennessee, a deeply conservative state that voted overwhelmingly for President Donald Trump and his tough stance on immigration.

If the lawmakers succeed, Tennessee would follow the lead of Washington, D.C., the only other local government to pass such an ordinance since Trump took office in January. Twenty other states already allow the in-state tuition.

To sell the idea, the bill's supporters have had to maneuver carefully, steering the debate away from illegal immigration policy whenever possible.

Instead, they are promoting the measure as an economic driver and an educational opportunity for students who didn't have a choice about crossing into the United States at a young age. They say the students are innocent victims of decades of political deadlock on immigration at the national level.

"I'm all for building the wall and U.S. sovereignty, closing our borders," said Rep. Mark White, a Memphis Republican and a bill sponsor. "But we didn't, and now we're damaging innocent people."

At the state Capitol, dozens of students whose parents crossed into the U.S. illegally and brought them along have gone lawmaker to lawmaker to share their personal stories. Republican Gov. Bill Haslam took time to meet and snap photos with them last month, and he has thrown his support behind the bill.

A House and Senate panel each have passed the proposal so far, and another House committee was scheduled to vote on it Tuesday.

Two years ago, when President Barack Obama was still in office, the proposal passed in the Senate and came one vote shy of passing in the House. The Senate may wait for the House to act first this year, Republican Speaker Randy McNally said.

Trump has spoken of mass deportations and building a U.S.-Mexico border wall. Nonetheless, White is optimistic the Tennessee bill has a chance.

"I'm just trying to protect Tennessee in the long run, because they're here," White said. "And if anybody thinks that we're going to send children who grew up here back out of this country, they're not living in the real world. We need to do what's the next best thing, and that's help them assimilate into our society."

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, about 20 states offer in-state tuition to students who are either in the United States illegally or here under Obama's Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, which protects them from deportation for two years and lets them work. A half-dozen or so of those states tilt Republican.

The Tennessee legislation would apply to students who have attended a state high school or home school program for two years.

Even if the bill passes, the students would not qualify for federal financial aid. Nor would they be eligible for state programs that offer students free tuition at community and technical colleges, said Ginger Hausser, director of external affairs for the Tennessee Board of Regents.

Sen. Todd Gardenhire, a Chattanooga Republican and the bill's sponsor in the Senate, notes that the state has already invested in the students by paying for their K-12 education, and that some have lived in Tennessee as long as their counterparts who are U.S. citizens. Yet they are required to pay three times what other in-state students pay to attend college, he said.

The bill's opponents are framing their arguments around illegal immigration. The same legislature continues to advance a bill that would cut funding to immigrant-protecting sanctuary cities.

"I don't think anybody in this room blames (the students)," Rep. Dawn White, a Republican from Murfreesboro, said in a committee meeting. "But, as a representative, I owe the state taxpayers the right to

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say, "Why are we subsidizing illegal students?"

Lisa Sherman-Nikolaus, Tennessee Immigrant & Refugee Rights Coalition policy director, said she is optimistic about the bill's chances amid support from the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce, the Tennessee Farm Bureau, the governor, and the state Board of Regents, which governs colleges, among others.

"We think that this is a real opportunity to remind people, remind legislators, that even in such a divisive climate we can all come together and agree that educating Tennesseans is important," Sherman-Nikolaus said.

Elman Gonzales, a 19-year-old who graduated from Sevierville County High School, said he could go back to East Tennessee State University if the bill becomes law. He had to drop out because tuition was \$12,000 a semester, temporarily sidelining his hopes of becoming a doctor.

Gonzales, who was brought to Tennessee at 2 years old when his parents moved from Honduras, said he was "genuinely surprised" at the bill's movement so far, "considering the political atmosphere."

Telling lawmakers their stories one-on-one has made a big difference, Gonzales said.

"That to me is going to make the most difference because that shows them directly that these students are being affected by this, and how much their lives can change by voting yes on this bill," Gonzales said.

White House officials offer change to health care bill

By ALAN FRAM, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — White House officials made a new offer to conservative House Republicans late Monday on the GOP's failed health care bill, hoping to resuscitate a measure that crashed spectacularly less than two weeks ago.

Vice President Mike Pence and two top White House officials made the offer in a closed-door meeting with members of the House Freedom Caucus, according to a participant. Opposition from the hard-line group, which has around three dozen conservative Republicans, contributed to circumstances that forced House Speaker Paul Ryan to withdraw the bill from a March 24 vote that would have produced a certain defeat.

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Also at Monday's meeting were White House chief of staff Reince Priebus and budget director Mick Mulvaney. The participant spoke on condition of anonymity to describe the private strategy session.

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Rep. Tom MacArthur, R-N.J., a leader of the moderate House Tuesday Group, was among moderate lawmakers who met with officials at the White House on Monday, a GOP aide said.

The Freedom Caucus has drawn the most wrath from the White House for its opposition to the bill. Some fellow House Republicans have also criticized members of the conservative group, accusing them of inflexibility that led to the downfall of the bill to replace "Obamacare," a top GOP legislative priority.

Six days after the House bill crashed, Trump tweeted that the Freedom Caucus "will hurt the entire Republican agenda" if they don't start cooperating. He added, "We must fight them" in 2018, a reference

to their re-election campaigns.

Several caucus members, who tend to represent safely Republican districts, tweeted back defiantly. But some have stressed a desire to move the legislation along if provisions are added that they believe would contain insurance costs.

Dems claim votes to block Gorsuch; GOP will override them

By ERICA WERNER and MARY CLARE JALONICK, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Democrats claimed the votes they needed Monday to block President Donald Trump's Supreme Court nominee, but the victory was only fleeting, setting up a historic showdown with Republicans who intend to rewrite Senate rules and muscle Neil Gorsuch onto the high court.

The coming fight was assured as the bitterly divided Judiciary Committee voted 11-9, along party lines, to send Gorsuch's nomination to the full Senate, where Majority Leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky has vowed he will be confirmed Friday.

Short of the 60 votes needed to overcome procedural hurdles, McConnell is ready to lead Republicans in a unilateral voting change so significant in the rules-conscious Congress that it's been dubbed the "nuclear option," lowering the confirmation threshold to a filibuster-proof simple majority in the 100-member Senate.

Sen. Chris Coons of Delaware became the key 41st vote for the Democrats Monday, declaring during committee debate that Gorsuch's conservative record showed an activist approach to the law and that he evaded questions during his confirmation hearings. Coons also said that Republicans' treatment of former President Barack Obama's Supreme Court nominee, Merrick Garland, left lasting scars after they denied him so much as a hearing following the death of Justice Antonin Scalia early last year.

"We are at a historic moment in the history of the United States Senate" due to actions by both parties, Coons said. "We have eroded the process for reaching agreement and dishonored our long traditions of acting above partisanship."

By day's end, 43 Democrats had said they won't support Gorsuch.

The long-term consequences of the coming confrontation could be profound, as the rules change Republicans intend to enact would apply to future Supreme Court nominees, too, allowing them to be voted onto the court without any input from the minority party. And though predicting a justice's votes can be difficult, confirmation of the 49-year-old Gorsuch is expected to restore the conservative majority that existed while Scalia was alive, which could then be in place or even expand over decades to come as some of the more liberal justices age.

For Republicans and Trump, Gorsuch's confirmation will be a moment of triumph, a bright spot in a troubled young administration that's failed on the legislative front with the health care bill and is under investigation over Russia connections. The nomination of Gorsuch, by contrast, has won universal praise from Republicans, some of whom call his appointment Trump's best move so far as president. Gorsuch has spent more than a decade on the federal appeals bench in Denver where he's issued consistently conservative rulings, and he appeared on Trump's list of potential candidates partly generated by the Federalist Society and Heritage Foundation during the campaign.

Gorsuch's confirmation will also be vindication for McConnell's strategy of refusing to fill Scalia's seat last year, instead leaving it open for the next president, even though few imagined then that that person would be Trump.

The showdown over the "nuclear option," expected on the Senate floor Thursday, is likely to be accompanied by much hand-wringing from senators bemoaning the decay of the chamber's traditions of bipartisanship and comity.

But both parties are to blame. When the Democrats were in the majority, they removed the 60-vote threshold for lower-court nominees in 2013 when Republicans were blocking Obama picks to a critical federal court. Republicans said then that Democrats would come to regret it.

Gorsuch will be confirmed "and he should be," the No. 2 Senate Republican, John Cornyn of Texas, said

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during Monday's debate. "If Judge Gorsuch is unacceptable to our Democratic colleagues, there will never be a nominee by this president that you will find acceptable. Never."

Gorsuch now counts 55 supporters in the Senate: the 52 Republicans, along with three moderate Democrats from states Trump won last November — Joe Manchin of West Virginia, Heidi Heitkamp of North Dakota and Joe Donnelly of Indiana. A fourth Senate Democrat, Michael Bennet from Gorsuch's home state of Colorado, has said he will not join in the filibuster against Gorsuch but has not said how he will vote on final passage.

Democrats claim the Republicans' treatment of Garland was worse than anything they ever did or are doing, and with Trump in the White House they are under intense pressure from liberal voters to oppose the president on every front. That gives them very little leeway to let Gorsuch onto the court unchallenged, even though all the current justices were confirmed without filibusters, aside from a half-hearted effort against Justice Samuel Alito.

Several Democrats also say Gorsuch has not done enough to demonstrate his independence from Trump at a time when the president has frequently assailed the judiciary and is embroiled in one controversy after another.

"The independence of our judicial branch has never been more threatened or more important," said Sen. Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut. "The possibility of the Supreme Court needing to enforce a subpoena against the president of the United States is far from idle speculation."

Protests rattle Ecuador following election fraud claims

By GONZALO SOLANO, Associated Press

QUITO, Ecuador (AP) — Supporters of Ecuadorean opposition leader Guillermo Lasso gathered in the streets for a second night Monday to protest what they consider fraud at the ballot box that tilted a presidential runoff in favor of his leftist rival.

Sunday's razor-thin election win by ruling party candidate Lenin Moreno bucked the trend of right-wing electoral victories in South America following 15 years of leftist domination. Even as calls from Latin American governments congratulating Moreno poured in, Lasso, a conservative banker, vowed to keep up the fight against the installation of an "illegitimate" government.

"We're not afraid of the miserable cowards who are on the wrong side of history," he told a crowd of a few thousand supporters outside the National Electoral Council in Quito.

By nightfall, many supporters went home but a few hundred die-hards, some with children in tow, remained in a peaceful vigil. A line of riot police looked on.

The scene was much calmer than the one on election night, when thousands of outraged Lasso supporters shouting "fraud" crashed through metal barricades to almost reach the entrance of the electoral council's headquarters in Quito. Scuffles also broke out in Guayaquil, where tear gas was fired to break up the crowd.

With more than 99 percent of polling places counted, Moreno had 51 percent of the vote while Lasso stood at just under 49 percent.

Key to Lasso's challenge of the results in all of Ecuador's 24 provinces were three exit polls that showed him winning. One by pollster Cedatos, which accurately predicted the results of the first round, gave him a victory by six percentage points.

Part of the problem is the opposition's distrust of the National Electoral Council, which it says has become an appendage of the executive in the way the electoral board in Venezuela has all but lost independence under President Nicolas Maduro, a key ally of Correa.

"We're looking at an unprecedented situation: those behind the fraud are the judges themselves," Lasso told foreign reporters, adding that his campaign would seek a recount once the results are certified. "We expect they'll deny our requests but in doing so they'll be confirming the fraud."

Despite such heated rhetoric Lasso so far has failed to present any evidence of vote tampering except for a single voting act of 248 ballots from a rural area whose tally is says was reversed in favor of Moreno

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when official results were computed.

The Organization of American States said its mission of electoral observers that visited at random 480 voting centers nationwide found no discrepancies between the tallies and the official results and encouraged Lasso to issue complaints through institutional channels.

Correa accused Lasso supporters of trying to deny the results and provoke violence. On Monday, he sent a flurry of tweets saying the Lasso campaign had hired Cedatos.

"By force they want to achieve what they can't at the ballot box," he said.

He also appeared alongside Moreno at changing of the guard ceremony at the presidential palace. Before a crowd of hundreds of supporters, the apparent President-elect sang "happy birthday" to Correa, who turns 54 later this week.

For weeks Ecuadoreans polarized by 10 years of Correa's iron-fisted rule had been bracing for a contested vote.

With Ecuador's economy slated to shrink by 2.7 percent this year as oil prices remain low, analysts had been anticipating that Lasso would rally support from the 60 percent of voters who backed anti-Correa candidates in the first round and join the growing list of Latin American nations — Argentina, Brazil, Peru and Venezuela — shifting to the right in recent elections.

The majority of voters also said they were hungry for change amid ongoing corruption allegations related to bribes that Brazilian construction giant Odebrecht paid to officials in Correa's government and a \$12 million contracting scandal at state-run PetroEcuador.

Yet in the final weeks of the race, Moreno inched ahead in polls amid an aggressive campaign led by Correa to cast Lasso as a wealthy, out-of-touch politician who profited from the country's 1999 banking crisis. Moreno, 64, also benefited from last-minute doubts that the pro-business Lasso if elected would gut social programs that have endeared poor voters to Correa's "Citizens' Revolution."

Outside the region, the election was being closely watched by supporters of WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange, who has been living under asylum at Ecuador's embassy in London since 2012. Before the election, Lasso had said he would evict the Australian activist, who is wanted for extradition by Sweden, within 30 days of taking office. Moreno said he would allow him to stay.

On his Twitter account shortly after the results became known, Assange took a jab at Lasso's pledge.

"I cordially invite Lasso to leave Ecuador within 30 days (with or without his tax haven millions)," he wrote.

Associated Press writer Joshua Goodman in Caracas, Venezuela, contributed to this report.

Bill O'Reilly, ex-Fox chief hit with more sexual allegations

By DAVID BAUDER, AP Television Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — A Fox News contributor came forward to level more sexual-harassment allegations against deposed chief executive Roger Ailes on Monday, two days after it was revealed the network's most popular on-air personality, Bill O'Reilly, has settled multiple complaints about his own behavior with women.

O'Reilly returned to the air on Monday following a weekend report in The New York Times that he and his employer had paid five women \$13 million to settle allegations of sexual harassment or other inappropriate conduct by Fox's ratings king. He made no mention of the case on his show.

Meanwhile, the lawyer for another woman who says she was punished for rebuffing O'Reilly's advances called on New York City's Human Rights Commission to investigate O'Reilly's behavior.

The new lawsuit against Ailes was brought by Fox's Julie Roginsky and is notable because it accuses Fox's current management of trying to cover up for Ailes.

Roginsky said Ailes, who lost his job last summer following sexual-harassment complaints he has denied, suggested she have sex with "older, married, conservative men." She said Ailes would insist upon a kiss hello at their meetings, requiring her to bend over so he could look down her dress.

She was seeking a permanent role on Fox's show "The Five." But after an April 2015 meeting at which she turned down Ailes' advances, he wouldn't meet with her again, and she never got the regular role,

she said.

Later, she said, she was pressured to join Team Roger, a group of people who publicly defended Ailes when the first harassment complaint made public against the Fox boss was brought by Gretchen Carlson last summer. Roginsky refused.

She said that even though Fox executives knew she had her own harassment allegations against Ailes, she was never encouraged to speak to the law firm hired by Fox News parent 21st Century Fox to investigate claims against him. And she said Fox never looked into her charges. Her lawyer would not say Monday why Roginsky never contacted the firm on her own.

Roginsky said that during a meeting in December, new Fox top executive Bill Shine told her he didn't believe the allegations against Ailes until recently. But the lawsuit alleges Shine and other top Fox executives should have known about Ailes' behavior much earlier.

"Shine and other senior executives kept Ailes' conduct secret and enabled it," said the lawsuit, filed in state court.

Fox News representatives did not immediately return messages for comment. But Fox's new human resources chief sent a memo to staff late Monday, saying that "in light of some of the accounts published over the last few days," he wanted to make clear the various avenues network employees could take if they had concerns about behavior in the workplace.

Roginsky said she believes Shine hasn't given her an opportunity for advancement in retaliation for her harassment complaint and her refusal to speak out against Carlson.

At a Los Angeles news conference Monday, lawyer Lisa Bloom detailed allegations against O'Reilly by Wendy Walsh, a regular guest on the prime-time show "The O'Reilly Factor."

Bloom said O'Reilly had told Walsh he would recommend her for a paid contributor role on the network. Walsh and O'Reilly had dinner in Los Angeles in 2013, but when Walsh refused his invitation to go to his hotel room, his attitude changed and she was soon dropped from the show, according to Walsh.

Bloom was seeking an investigation by the city Human Rights Commission. A spokesman for the commission said no claim had been filed. Claims have to address activity that happened within the city's five boroughs and must be filed within one year of an alleged infraction.

Walsh said she came forward because she was told by a Times reporter that many of the women who have accused O'Reilly of harassment are bound by gag orders. She said she is not bound by any such agreement, and the statute of limitations for suing has run out.

"Nobody can silence me because my voice is not for sale," Walsh said. "Nobody can buy my voice."

O'Reilly said over the weekend he is vulnerable to lawsuits from people who threaten to cause him bad publicity unless they get paid. He said he had "put to rest any controversies" to spare his children.

O'Reilly's ratings have gone up over the past year with the intense interest in politics. Independent studies show he generates more than \$100 million in advertising revenue per year for TV's top-rated cable news network. But at least one advertiser, car company Mercedes-Benz, said it was pulling its ads from the show because of the "disturbing" allegations.

Anthony McCartney in Los Angeles and Deepti Hajela and Tali Arbel in New York contributed to this report.

Justice Dept. seeks pause on agreement with Baltimore police

By SADIE GURMAN and ERIC TUCKER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Justice Department late Monday asked a federal judge for more time to "review and assess" a proposed agreement to overhaul the Baltimore police department, saying it needed to determine how it might conflict with the crime-fighting agenda of new Attorney General Jeff Sessions.

The government's request for a 90-day continuance came three days before a scheduled hearing before a federal judge, and just hours after Sessions announced he had ordered a sweeping review of the Justice Department's interactions with local law enforcement, including such court-enforceable improvement plans

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with troubled police agencies.

It provided an early glimpse of the attorney general's stance on police department oversight and his ambivalence about mandating widespread change of local law enforcement agencies.

Sessions, an Alabama Republican who cultivated a tough-on-crime reputation during 20 years in the Senate, has repeatedly expressed concern that lengthy investigations of a police department can malign an entire agency. That view reflects a dramatic break from an Obama administration that saw such probes as essential in holding local law enforcement accountable for unconstitutional practices.

The federal government cited several reasons for the requested delay, including new Justice Department policies that federal officials say are aimed at reducing crime as well as a new memo that seeks a review of existing or proposed consent decrees.

If granted, the request would effectively put on pause a process that could lead to a sweeping overhaul in the policies and practices of the Baltimore police force. The two sides reached agreement on a consent decree earlier this year before Attorney General Loretta Lynch left the Justice Department.

The department said it was aware of the need for police reform in Baltimore but added that the city "has made progress toward reform on its own and, as a consequence, it may be possible to take these changes into account where appropriate to ensure future compliance while protecting public safety."

Both the Baltimore Police Department and Mayor Catherine Pugh said a delay would threaten public trust in the process.

"We want to move forward," Pugh told The Associated Press. "We want to work with our police department. We believe there are reforms needed."

The filing echoed a far-ranging memo made public Monday that called for an immediate "review of all Department activities," including "existing or contemplated consent decrees," which were a staple of the Obama administration's efforts to overhaul agencies after racially charged incidents.

A department spokeswoman would not elaborate on which consent decrees would get a fresh look or describe the potential outcomes.

In addition to Baltimore, the review also renewed questions about the fate of negotiations with Chicago's police department after a report released in the final days of Lynch's tenure found officers there had violated the constitutional rights of residents for years.

Sessions has not committed to such an agreement and has repeatedly said he believes broad investigations of police departments risk unfairly smearing entire agencies and harming officer morale. He has also suggested that officers' reluctance to aggressively police has contributed to a spike in violence in some cities.

He reiterated that concern in the memo, adding that "local control and local accountability are necessary for effective policing. It is not the responsibility of the federal government to manage non-federal law enforcement agencies."

The proposed consent decree in Baltimore came after the Justice Department released a scathing report detailing longstanding patterns of racial profiling and excessive force within the city's police force. The review was prompted by the death of Freddie Gray, a 25-year-old black man whose neck was broken in the back of a transport wagon, and whose death roiled the city.

Activist Ray Kelly said the requested delay threatened to undermine hard-fought efforts to heal the fractured relationship.

While consent decrees that are in negotiation, or have not yet been reached, could now be in the balance under new leadership, it would be harder to change the consent decrees that already exist in cities such as Cleveland, Albuquerque, New Mexico, and Ferguson, Missouri.

Though there is a mechanism that permits the Justice Department to seek to modify existing agreements that are overseen by a court, most judges would not be sympathetic to amend an agreement for purely political reasons, said Jonathan Smith, a civil rights attorney in the Obama administration.

He said it was possible that a consent decree in Chicago could still be reached — both sides reached an agreement in principle earlier this year — because of political pressures.

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"Whether that agreement will be any good and effective, I think is much harder to know," Smith said.

Associated Press writer Juliet Linderman in Baltimore contributed to this report.

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Tuesday, April 4, the 94th day of 2017. There are 271 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On April 4, 1968, civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr., 39, was shot and killed on a balcony of the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee.

On this date:

In 1818, Congress decided the flag of the United States would consist of 13 red and white stripes and 20 stars, with a new star to be added for every new state of the Union.

In 1841, President William Henry Harrison succumbed to pneumonia one month after his inaugural, becoming the first U.S. chief executive to die in office.

In 1859, "Dixie" was performed publicly for the first time by Bryant's Minstrels at Mechanics' Hall in New York.

In 1864, President Abraham Lincoln, in a letter to Kentucky newspaper editor Albert G. Hodges, wrote: "I claim not to have controlled events, but confess plainly that events have controlled me."

In 1887, Susanna Madora Salter became the first woman elected mayor of an American community: Argonia, Kansas.

In 1917, the U.S. Senate voted 82-6 in favor of declaring war against Germany (the House followed suit two days later by a vote of 373-50).

In 1933, the Navy airship USS Akron crashed in severe weather off the New Jersey coast with the loss of 73 lives.

In 1949, 12 nations, including the United States, signed the North Atlantic Treaty in Washington, D.C.

In 1958, Johnny Stompanato, an enforcer for crime boss Mickey Cohen and the boyfriend of actress Lana Turner, was stabbed to death by Turner's teenage daughter, Cheryl Crane, who said Stompanato had attacked her mother.

In 1975, more than 130 people, most of them children, were killed when a U.S. Air Force transport plane evacuating Vietnamese orphans crash-landed shortly after takeoff from Saigon. Microsoft was founded by Bill Gates and Paul Allen in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

In 1983, the space shuttle Challenger roared into orbit on its maiden voyage. (It was destroyed in the disaster of Jan. 1986.)

In 1991, Sen. John Heinz, R-Pa., and six other people, including two children, were killed when a helicopter collided with Heinz's plane over a schoolyard in Merion, Pennsylvania.

Ten years ago: Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (ah-muh-DEE'-neh-zahd) announced the surprise release of 15 captive British sailors and marines. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi held talks with Syrian President Bashar Assad over White House objections. Radio shock jock Don Imus outraged some of his listeners by disparaging the Rutgers University women's basketball team as "nappy headed hos." (Despite an apology, Imus was fired by CBS Radio and cable network MSNBC; he was hired elsewhere by year's end.)

Five years ago: Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney unleashed a strong attack on President Barack Obama's truthfulness, accusing him of running a "hide-and-seek" re-election campaign in an address to newspaper editors and publishers. A federal judge sentenced five former New Orleans police officers to prison for the deadly Danziger Bridge shootings in the chaotic days following Hurricane Katrina. (The verdicts in the case were later set aside by the judge, who cited prosecutorial misconduct; the officers

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pleaded guilty in 2016 to reduced charges.)

One year ago: The Supreme Court, in *Evenwel v. Abbott*, unanimously endorsed election maps that bolstered the growing political influence of America's Latinos, ruling that states could count everyone, not just eligible voters, in drawing voting districts. A tourist helicopter crashed and burned in Great Smoky Mountains National Park in eastern Tennessee, killing all five people aboard. Kris Jenkins hit a 3-pointer at the buzzer to lift Villanova to the national title with a 77-74 victory over North Carolina in one of the wildest finishes in the history of the NCAA Tournament. Allen Iverson, Shaquille O'Neal, Tom Izzo, Sheryl Swoopes, Yao Ming and Jerry Reinsdorf were elected to the Basketball Hall of Fame.

Today's Birthdays: Former Sen. Richard Lugar, R-Ind., is 85. Recording executive Clive Davis is 85. Bandleader Hugh Masekela is 78. Author Kitty Kelley is 75. Actor Craig T. Nelson is 73. Actor Walter Charles is 72. Actress Christine Lahti is 67. Country singer Steve Gatlin (The Gatlin Brothers) is 66. Actress Mary-Margaret Humes is 63. Writer-producer David E. Kelley is 61. Actress Constance Shulman is 59. Actor Phil Morris is 58. Actress Lorraine Toussaint is 57. Actor Hugo Weaving is 57. Rock musician Craig Adams (The Cult) is 55. Talk show host/comic Graham Norton is 54. Actor David Cross is 53. Actor Robert Downey Jr. is 52. Actress Nancy McKeon is 51. Actor Barry Pepper is 47. Country singer Clay Davidson is 46. Rock singer Josh Todd (Buckcherry) is 46. Singer Jill Scott is 45. Rock musician Magnus Sveningsson (The Cardigans) is 45. Magician David Blaine is 44. Singer Kelly Price is 44. Rhythm-and-blues singer Andre Dalyrimple (Soul For Real) is 43. Country musician Josh McSwain (Parmalee) is 42. Actor James Roday is 41. Actress Natasha Lyonne is 38. Actor Eric Andre is 34. Actress Amanda Righetti is 34. Actress-singer Jamie Lynn Spears is 26. Actress Daniela Bobadilla is 24. Pop singer Austin Mahone (muh-HOHN') is 21.

Thought for Today: "Take the attitude of a student, never be too big to ask questions, never know too much to learn something new." — Og Mandino (man-DEE'-noh), American author (1923-1996).