

# Groton Daily Independent

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**Saturday, June 24**

**Legion:** at Redfield Tourney

**Jr. Teener:** at Milbank Tourney

**Jr. Legion:** hosts Mobridge for 2 games, 1:30 p.m.

### 25

**St. John's Lutheran:** Worship at 9 a.m.

**Emmanuel Lutheran:** Worship at 9 a.m.

**United Methodist Church:** Conde worship, 9 a.m.; coffee fellowship time, 10 a.m., Groton worship, 11 a.m.

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

**First Presbyterian:** Bible Study at 9 a.m., Worship at 10 a.m.

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

**Legion:** at Redfield Tourney

**Jr. Teener:** at Milbank Tourney

### 26

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

**Senior Menu:** Chicken rice casserole, green beans, spinach salad, chocolate pudding with bananas, whole wheat bread.

**Groton School:** School board meeting, 7 p.m.

**U12:** at Webster for 2 games, 6 p.m., at the new complex

**U10:** at Webster for 2 games, 6 p.m., at the new complex

**U8 Blue:** at Webster for 2 games, 6 p.m., at the old field

**Softball:** Hosts Ellendale, (U10 at 6 p.m., U12 at 7 p.m.)

4:30pm: JV FB at Redfield-Doland

6:30pm: VB hosts Florence/Henry with C/JV at 6:30

**Olive Grove:** Kid's lessons, 9:30 a.m.-10:15 a.m. and 10:15 a.m. to 11 a.m.

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

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

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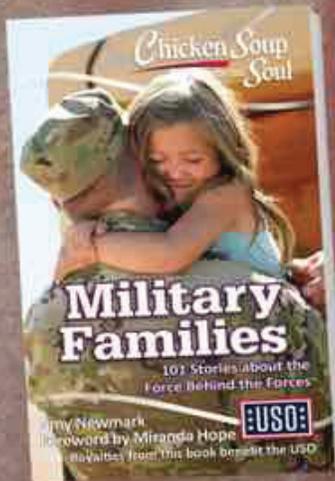
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“PATRIOTISM IS A THING  
OF THE HEART. A MAN IS A  
PATRIOT IF HIS HEART  
BEATS TRUE TO HIS  
COUNTRY.”

-CHARLES E. JEFFERSON



Chicken Soup  
for the Soul

## Utility seeking input from electric customers

GROTON, S.D. - Residents of Groton may soon receive a call asking about their electric service.

The city's wholesale power supplier, Heartland Consumers Power District, has partnered with SDS Research to conduct a customer survey to learn more about the residents of the community and the expectations they have of their electricity provider.

Representatives from SDS began making calls June 26 asking about customer service, social media, and energy efficiency rebates, among other topics.

"The goal of the survey is for Heartland to get a better idea of what people value and how we can better support the city in providing services beneficial to the residents of each community we serve," said Heartland Communications Manager Ann Hyland.

SDS will randomly select residents to call and Hyland is hopeful the residents of Groton will be willing to take a few minutes to answer their questions.

"It is our goal to add value to the communities we serve and the best way we can do that is by asking questions and generating feedback," noted Hyland.

The survey is also available online and all electric customers of the city of Groton are invited and encouraged to fill it out. You can do so by visiting [hcpd.com/survey](http://hcpd.com/survey). The survey will be available until Thursday, July 6.

Heartland Consumers Power District is a non-profit, public power utility located in Madison, S.D. Heartland provides reliable power as well as energy services and community development programs to the city of Groton as well as other communities, state agencies and organizations in South Dakota, Minnesota, Kansas and Iowa.

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**Championship Flight Winner was the S & S Lumber team of Jacquelyn Patterson, Drake Patterson, Jes Guthmiller, Austin Schuelke, Chris Kassube and Jake Unzen.** (Photo by Paul Kosel)

## 26th Annual Groton Chamber Golf Tourney June 23, 2017, Olive Grove Golf Course, Groton.

### Championship Flight

64- S & S Lumber (Drake Patterson, Jacquelyn Patterson, Austin Schuelke, Jake Unzen, Chris Kassube, Jes Guthmiller).

65- Olive Grove (Randy Stanley, Sue Stanley, Bob Walter, Vicki Walter, Tyler Sperry, Pat Krause)

65- Ken's (Brenda Waage, Kerry Brandenburger, Paula Krueger, Roger Colestock, Brian Schuring, Henry Renville).

66- James Valley (Jason Hill, Tami Zimney, Tyler Herman, Tina Guthmiller, Eric Moody, Jeremy Bostian).

67- Larson Farms (Brad Larson, Dar Larson, Savanna Larson, Rachel Larson, Lance Bonn and Brock Sandness).

### First Flight

66- Johnson Farms (Jarod Fliehs, Jerry Johnson, Becca Johnson, Jeff Fliehs, Bridget Fliehs, Justin Bartel).

67- Groton Golf Cars (Steve Dunker, Betty Dunker, Craig Dunker, Tasha Dunker, Lorin Fliehs, Terry Gilchrist).

68- Grand Slam Computers (Matt Locke, Mitch Locke, Heidi Locke, Spencer Locke, Dalton Locke).

69- Groton Ford (Angie Sombke, Clint Sombke, Les Holland Jr., Craig Jondahl, Brody Sombke, Barb Gillick).

71- MJ's/Plains Commerce Bank (Jeff Amdahl, Daniel Amdahl, Kyle Haaland, Brian Carrels, Rachelle Carrels, Rhonda Hilsendeger).

**Longest Putt #9:** Loren Fliehs

**Longest Putt #1:** Roger Colestock

**Closest to Pin #8:** Jason Hill

**Closest to Pin #4:**

**First Flight Winner was the Johnson Farms team of Jarod Fliehs, Jeff Fliehs, Bridget Fliehs, Becca Johnson, Jerry Johnson and Justin Bartel.**

(Photo by Paul Kosel)



## Updated Nonmeandered Waters Information Available Online

PIERRE, S.D. – The South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) has posted additional information online for those needing clarification on application of the Open Waters Compromise. The information includes a summary of the law, frequently asked questions and contact information for landowners and sportsmen.

“GFP is working to keep the public informed. We encourage those who are uncertain about where fishing is allowed to check out the website or reach out to our office,” said GFP Secretary Kelly Hepler. “We also continue to work with landowners and have been having one-on-one discussions with them.”

The Open Waters Compromise (HB 1001) information is available at <http://gfp.sd.gov/fishing-boating/>.

## USDA Authorizes Emergency Grazing in Drought-Stricken Montana, North Dakota and South Dakota

WASHINGTON, June 23, 2017 – Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue today authorized emergency grazing on Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) lands in Montana, North Dakota and South Dakota. All or parts of these states are experiencing severe or extreme drought conditions – indicated as categories D2 and D3 on the U.S. Drought Monitor.

“Due to reduced availability of forage, ranchers in the hardest hit locations have already been culling their herds,” said Perdue. “Without alternative forage options like grazing CRP lands, livestock producers are faced with the economically devastating potential of herd liquidation.”

CRP is a voluntary program administered by USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) available to agricultural producers to help them safeguard environmentally sensitive land and, when needed, provide emergency relief to livestock producers suffering the impacts of certain natural disasters.

Emergency grazing is authorized to begin immediately and extends through Sept. 30, unless conditions improve. Producers must work with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to develop a modified conservation plan that is site specific, including the authorized grazing duration to reflect local wildlife needs. FSA State Committees will monitor emergency grazing implementation at the local level to mitigate adverse impact on nesting areas and established CRP vegetation.

“If the drought continues and pasture recovery becomes less likely, feed supplies will decline, the quality and quantity of hay is reduced and stock water becomes scarce – considerable stressors for both the livestock and our producers,” said Perdue. “If opening up grazing lands reduces even some of these stressors for these ranchers, then it’s the right thing for us to do.”

Eligible CRP participants can use the acreage for grazing their own livestock or may grant another livestock producer use of the CRP acreage. There will be no CRP annual rental payment reductions assessed for acres grazed.

To take advantage of the emergency grazing provisions, producers should contact their local USDA Service Center. To find your local USDA Service Center visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.



## Americans Deserve Better Than Obamacare

The Senate recently released the discussion draft of the plan to fix the failing health care system in our country, and Senate leadership is hoping to hold a vote before the 4th of July holiday. My staff and I have been reviewing the legislation to make sure the provisions included are good for South Dakotans. Like any legislation, we will carefully analyze it before taking a vote. I encourage South Dakotans to read it too, and to share their thoughts with me. The text of the bill, along with an email form, are available on my website at [www.rounds.senate.gov](http://www.rounds.senate.gov). One thing we know with certainty is this proposal is already better than Obamacare, a system that has failed the American people and must be fixed before it's too late.

The reason we need to fix Obamacare in short order is because insurance underwriters are planning for 2018; they need some certainty as to what the health care marketplace will look like so they can calculate risks and set rates. Right now under Obamacare, South Dakotans' premiums are expected to increase nearly 40 percent next year on the individual market. Premiums have already increased 124 percent over the past four years for South Dakota families. We need to act quickly and responsibly to provide relief from Obamacare – it has become a moral obligation. When families are spending more on health care premiums than their home mortgage, that's unsustainable.

I have been encouraged by the many discussions I have had with my Senate colleague over the past few months as we've worked together to share our priorities for health care reform. While we are still analyzing and we know there is still work to be done, it appears that this bill seeks to accomplish a number of goals that I've said all along must be included in any reform plan, including language to stabilize the insurance markets that have left millions of Americans with no coverage options.

The Senate health care bill also takes steps to reform and safeguard Medicaid by allowing states to have more flexibility in administering the program, makes no changes to coverage for preexisting conditions, and provides a stable transition as we move away from Obamacare to a new, more competitive market. Additionally, it removes the individual and employer mandates, so Americans aren't forced to pay for expensive health insurance that they don't like, want or need.

I was pleased that the discussion draft includes a number of provisions that I've said all along need to be included in any health care bill we put forward. It would allow children to stay on parents' plans until age 26 and allows individuals with preexisting conditions to keep their coverage as long as they stay insured. It is important that any replacement plan approved by Congress allows for a transition period, where people can move to different plans without losing health care coverage. It maintains assurances for guaranteed portability, guaranteed renewability and it provides reassurance that individuals with serious illnesses will always have access to coverage.

Obamacare left Americans with fewer choices and higher costs. Around a third of counties in the United States have just one choice of insurer this year, and nearly 45 percent of counties could have one or no insurer to choose from in 2018. Americans deserve better than Obamacare, and Senate Republicans are dedicated to giving them a choice in their health care options once again.

Reforming the health care system in the United States is a huge undertaking but it needs to be done soon before Obamacare completely crumbles under its own weight. I am encouraged by the progress the Senate has made to improve our health care system, and look forward to continuing to work on it in the days to come.

## Feeding Ditch Hay During Drought

BROOKINGS, S.D. - Farmers and ranchers across the state may cut and bale state highway ditches adjacent to their property as a way to provide access to more forage during the on-going drought in South Dakota.

This is part of the State of Emergency declared by Governor Dennis Daugaard.

"As part of the State of Emergency, the state eased haying and transportation restrictions to assist live-stock producers," explained Alvaro Garcia, SDSU Extension Agriculture and Natural Resources Program Director & Professor.

The S.D. Department of Transportation suspended all mowing operations until July 5, 2017 to allow farmers to access to more hay. The state also authorized producers to travel statewide without a commercial driver's license (CDL) to ease transport of feed in the drought stricken area.

### July is the Best time to Harvest Ditch Hay

Although it is a good practice to have the bales of ditch hay analyzed for at least crude protein and total digestible nutrients (TDN) - and balance diets accordingly - Garcia said that if the bales are not analyzed, based on research, the best time for livestock producers to harvest ditch hay is during the month of July.

"During 2015, NDSU Extension analyzed 182 samples of harvested ditch hay from across the state. The results showed that most of the ditch hay consisted of cool-season grasses, predominantly smooth brome grass. There were differences in nutrient composition that were attributed mostly to variability in the stage of maturity at cutting. The best compromise between tonnage and quality seems to be when ditch hay is harvested precisely during early July," Garcia said.

### Consider safety & herbicides

When deciding to harvest ditch hay, is very important to thoroughly inspect the area to make sure that the ditch is tractor-safe and will not result in a dangerous rollover.

Garcia also encouraged producers to inspect/rid the area of garbage that may have accumulated such as glass bottles, aluminum cans, plastic, etc.

"In addition, it is important to know whether the roadsides have been sprayed for weeds," he said. "Some herbicides are not cleared to be used on forage that is to be fed to livestock."

He added that some broadleaf herbicides sprayed on ditch hay fed to cattle are eliminated intact in the manure. "If manure from animals fed ditch hay sprayed with these herbicides is applied to the fields, there is a good chance the herbicide will hurt yields or even the whole subsequent broadleaf crop," Garcia said.

Current research-based suggestions are to skip at least two growing seasons before planting broadleaf crops to acreage that was fertilized with manure from these animals.

"There have not been health issues reported in cattle fed hay treated with either herbicide," Garcia said.

To find out whether a ditch has been sprayed with herbicide, contact your local county or Township government or SD DOT offices.

For more information on feeding ditch hay, contact SDSU Extension staff. A complete listing can be found under the Field Staff Listing at [iGrow.org](http://iGrow.org).

## John Thune U.S. SENATOR - SOUTH DAKOTA



### **Better Care for South Dakotans**

It's been more than seven years since Republicans first predicted that Obamacare would lead to higher costs and fewer health care options for the American people. I honestly hoped we'd be wrong and that Americans would be better off. But we weren't. And they aren't. Sure, Obamacare had good intentions, but good intentions don't make up for bad policy.

Today, the problems created by the failed law continue to stack up – premiums and deductibles are skyrocketing, choices are diminishing, and co-ops are failing. Obamacare is in a death spiral, and South Dakotans deserve better than what they're receiving.

The easy way out of this situation would be for Republicans to sit on the sidelines and watch Obamacare implode. It will. It's only a matter of time. Early in this process, Democrats made it clear that they weren't interested in working with Republicans unless certain unrealistic demands were met. So, while it would be far easier to just take a pass on reforming health care, I didn't get involved in public service to be a benchwarmer. I got involved to get in the game.

I've been discussing Obamacare's failures and the reasons why it needed to be overhauled since the law was first enacted back in 2010. Since then, the Senate Finance Committee, of which I'm a longtime member, has held more than 30 hearings on health care. The Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, which also plays an important role in health care reform, has held more than a dozen. It's been well-litigated in the halls of Congress as well as in the court of public opinion. The issues aren't new, nor are many of the ideas we've discussed along the way.

Most importantly, throughout this process, I've listened to South Dakotans who've shared their personal Obamacare experiences. From 2013-2017, premiums on the South Dakota health care exchange more than doubled. Those kinds of rate increases are simply unsustainable, particularly for South Dakota families living paycheck to paycheck. Some folks have told me they're paying \$2,000 per month in premiums and have \$7,000+ deductibles. It's hard to call it insurance when the plan is too expensive for a family to even see the benefits.

Over the past few months, my colleagues and I have worked hard to boil down our ideas and develop a legislative solution to deliver health care that is more affordable, patient-centered, and flexible than Obamacare. The Senate health care bill, the Better Care Act, would do just that. The bill would help stabilize insurance markets that are collapsing, improve affordability of health care, preserve access to care for those with pre-existing conditions, and sustain Medicaid, while also ensuring those who rely on the program don't have the rug pulled out from under them. And I personally fought to include in the bill a tax credit that would help low-income South Dakotans and seniors – those who need it the most.

Our bill, which is a modest 142 pages long, isn't perfect. No bill really is. But the Better Care Act represents a far better and more responsible approach to caring for the American people than the 2700-page disaster that is Obamacare. We must act now, because now is the time to move toward a better system that provides better, more affordable care for all South Dakotans.



## Peace and Security

You can hardly open the paper, turn on the TV, or scroll through your social media newsfeed without learning of another outbreak of domestic or international violence. So often, radical Islamic terrorists and other menacing groups thrive in conflict-rich areas of the globe, making it necessary in some cases to mitigate instability and promote peace to strengthen our own security.

Research covering conflicts from Northern Ireland to Africa has shown that peace agreements are 35 percent more likely to last at least 15 years when women are involved in the negotiations. The added success can be contributed to many factors – not the least of which is that women are impacted by conflict in different ways than men, so their involvement in peace talks allows for a more comprehensive approach.

In many war-torn countries, for instance, women control large segments of the economy. While their husbands, sons and brothers are taking up arms, women take on the responsibility of running the local markets and educating their children. This gives them a significant stake in the economy and an active role in shaping the next generation. The insight can be invaluable.

At the same time, data show when women are left behind, the chance of conflict increases. Take Syria, as an example. It's one of the world's most war-torn countries. Women there face incredible restrictions on where they may go without a man accompanying them. In many communities, only men can be a child's legal guardian and marriages are allowed for girls as young as 13. As the nation's conflict deepened, restrictions on women grew – and the situation only worsened when terrorist groups crept into the areas of greatest instability. For instance, ISIL, which has claimed significant amounts of territory within Syria, uses human trafficking and sex slavery as an income-generating business for their terrorist activities.

When women are empowered, however, we observe different results. In fact, a study by Inclusive Security found "when 35 percent of parliamentarians are women, the risk of relapse into conflict is near zero."

Despite knowing all this, women are often underrepresented in conflict prevention and resolution.

Bringing women to the table during peace negotiations won't solve every conflict, nor will it unilaterally eliminate the threat of terrorism. But our military and diplomatic corps, which are second to none, should have as many tools as possible at their disposal to mitigate conflict and keep America safe.

This June, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the Women, Peace, and Security Act, which I authored. This bipartisan bill would require leaders within the State and Defense departments to develop a comprehensive strategy that increases and strengthens women's participation in peace negotiations and conflict prevention globally. Through the meaningful congressional oversight this legislation outlines, we can help ensure women gain a critical seat at the negotiating table, increasing the opportunity for lasting peace and further strengthening America's security.

## Fire Marshal: Firework Safety Needed Especially In Dry Conditions

PIERRE, S.D. – South Dakota's Fire Marshal says it is important to be careful with fireworks every Fourth of July, but especially this year.

"Using fireworks in a safe manner is always the primary concern, but with the dry conditions in most of South Dakota this year, there is even more of a risk of fireworks starting unintentional fires," says Fire Marshal Paul Merriman. "We are really encouraging people to be careful with fireworks."

Sale of fireworks in South Dakota is legal beginning Tuesday, June 27, and can be purchased until Wednesday, July 5. This year, it's legal to discharge fireworks through Sunday, July 9.

"The use of fireworks really comes down to common sense," Merriman says. "People need to read and follow the instructions on the fireworks. Mishandled fireworks can result in injuries or fires."

Since some individual cities may adopt fireworks limits that are stricter than state law, Merriman suggests that citizens check local ordinances and regulations. Recent hot weather also has increased the fire danger index in many areas of the state. Merriman says those who use fireworks have to be even more careful.

Merriman offers a few simple safety tips:

- \*\*\* Follow the instructions on the product;
- \*\*\* Avoid using fireworks in places where a fire could start;
- \*\*\* Keep a source of water handy; and,
- \*\*\* Many fireworks such as sparklers, which are popular with younger children, can cause painful burns and should be used with adult supervision.

The state Fire Marshal's Office is part of the state Department of Public Safety.

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## Pulling Through Another Drought

As of late, I have been keeping my eye on the U.S. Drought Monitor. The monitor is updated each Thursday, and as I write this, over 50 percent of the state is in a drought with an additional 32 percent experiencing abnormally dry conditions. Things are worst in the northcentral part of the state, particularly in Corson, Dewey, Campbell, Walworth, McPherson, Edmunds and Potter counties. Right in the center of this seven county area the drought monitor now indicates extreme drought conditions. Looking at the U.S. map, Montana, North Dakota and South Dakota are the only states currently experiencing severe drought.

Drought is not unusual here. In the first few years of statehood, South Dakota experienced a prolonged drought that lasted from 1887 until the mid-1890s. The conditions were so bad that some people started packing to move back east. Gov. Arthur Mellette implored individuals to donate food, clothing and coal to farmers who were impacted. He himself gave \$3,600 of his own money and later said some would not have survived the winter months without the private donations.

The situation we are faced with today is not as dire. Still, even a less severe drought affects everyday life in South Dakota. To some, it means just minor inconveniences – like no fireworks or campfires, but to others it can mean a major disruption of one's livelihood. More than anyone, our farmers and ranchers are feeling the impact. The drought has stunted grass growth and hay production in much of the state, and our ag producers are scrambling to keep livestock fed.

In response to the increasingly dry conditions, I have declared a statewide emergency to provide producers some relief. Under the emergency declaration, farmers and ranchers across the state may cut and bale state highway ditches adjacent to their property. The order authorizes producers to transport feed without a Commercial Driver's License, waives federal trucking regulations and permits haulers to move oversize hay loads up to 12 feet wide from 4 a.m. to 10 p.m. I have also activated the State Drought Task Force which monitors drought effects and coordinates the exchange of information among governmental, agricultural, fire and water-supply entities.

This week I also sent a letter to Secretary Perdue of the U.S. Department of Agriculture requesting the department make available as soon as possible Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres for emergency haying and grazing. The early release of CRP acres could be tremendously helpful for South Dakota farmers and ranchers during this challenging time.

The emergency declaration, drought task force and the potential availability of CRP acres will provide some relief to those who are suffering from the drought, but government help is limited. Ultimately, it is the perseverance of South Dakotans that will pull us through. The drive to overcome has been instilled in us by our ancestors and it is what carried us through droughts in our past.

This was something President Franklin Delano Roosevelt witnessed when he visited South Dakota during the Great Depression. After his South Dakota trip, he said this:

"No cracked earth, no blistering sun, no burning wind, no grasshoppers, are a permanent match for the indomitable American farmers and stockmen and their wives and children who have carried on through desperate days, and inspire us with their self-reliance, their tenacity and their courage."

I could not agree more.

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## Today in Weather History

June 24, 1902: Very strong winds occurred during the evening hours over portions of Hand and Stanley, to Turner and Lincoln Counties. Heavy losses occurred to barns and other farm outbuildings, trees, and windmills. One person was killed, and several were injured. A peak wind gust of 67 mph was recorded in Pierre.

June 24, 2003: An F4 tornado destroyed or heavily damaged all buildings, other structures, and vehicles in the small town of Manchester, in Kingsbury County. Propane and fuel oil tanks were destroyed. Many homes were stripped to the foundation. Of the six residents of the town, four were injured and were transported to hospitals. Three were deemed to be seriously injured, but none of the injuries were listed as life-threatening. One of the injured was in a basement, one was blown out of the home on the way to the same basement, and two were in a mobile home which was destroyed. The tornado damaged crops, trees, and power lines south of Manchester before reaching the town. The tornado also heavily damaged several farms north of Manchester, including two farms on which several buildings, including the houses, were destroyed. About 12 cattle were killed and others injured. The amount of crop damage was not known. Throughout the path, the tornado was observed to have multiple vortices. The tornado was seen and videotaped by numerous storm chasers and researchers. Researchers also deployed weather sensors around the town of Manchester. One of these sensors recorded a 100 millibar pressure drop as the tornado passed.

1816 - The cold weather of early June finally gave way to several days of 90 degree heat in Massachusetts, including a reading of 99 degrees at Salem. (David Ludlum)

1924 - Six men at a rock quarry south of Winston-Salem, NC, sought shelter from a thunderstorm. The structure chosen contained a quantity of dynamite. Lightning struck a near-by tree causing the dynamite to explode. The men were killed instantly. (The Weather Channel)

1929: In Durban, South Africa, a storm drops hailstones the size of baseballs. The rattle produced by the storm is described as sounding like "machine gun fire."

1951 - Twelve inches of hail broke windows and roofs, and dented automobiles, causing more than fourteen million dollars damage. The storm plowed 200 miles from Kingmand County KS into Missouri, with the Wichita area hardest hit. It was the most disastrous hailstorm of record for the state of Kansas. (David Ludlum)

1952 - Thunderstorms produced a swath of hail 60 miles long and 3.5 miles wide through parts of Hand, Beadle, Kingsbury, Miner and Jerauld counties in South Dakota. Poultry and livestock were killed, and many persons were injured. Hail ten inches in circumference was reported at Huron SD. (The Weather Channel)

1975: An Eastern Airlines Boeing 727 crashed at JFK airport in New York City. 113 of the 124 people on board the aircraft died. Researcher Theodore Fujita studied the incident and discovered that a microburst caused the crash. His research led to improved air safety. The tower never experienced the microburst, which was held back by a sea-breeze front. The plane crashed 2,400 feet short of the runway. Click [HERE](#) for more information from the History Channel.

1987 - Thunderstorms spawned six tornadoes in eastern Colorado. Baseball size hail was reported near Yoder, CO, and thunderstorm winds gusting to 92 mph derailed a train near Pratt, KS. The town of Gould, OK, was soaked with nearly an inch and a half of rain in just ten minutes. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Forty-three cities reported record high temperatures for the date. Valentine NE reported an all-time record high of 110 degrees, and highs of 102 degrees at Casper, WY, 103 degrees at Reno, NV, and 106 degrees at Winnemucca, NV, were records for the month of June. Highs of 98 degrees at Logan, UT, and 109 degrees at Rapid City, SD, equalled June records. Lightning killed twenty-one cows near Conway, SC. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Thunderstorms developing along a warm front produced severe weather from Colorado and New Mexico to Kansas and Nebraska. Thunderstorms spawned seven tornadoes, and produced wind gusts to 80 mph at Wood River, NE, and hail three inches in diameter at Wheeler, KS. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)



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## Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 67.7

Low Outside Temp: 50.5

High Gust: 23

Precip: 0.00

## Today's Info

Record High: 108° in 1988

Record Low: 41° in 1958

Average High: 80°F

Average Low: 56°F

Average Precip in June: 2.97

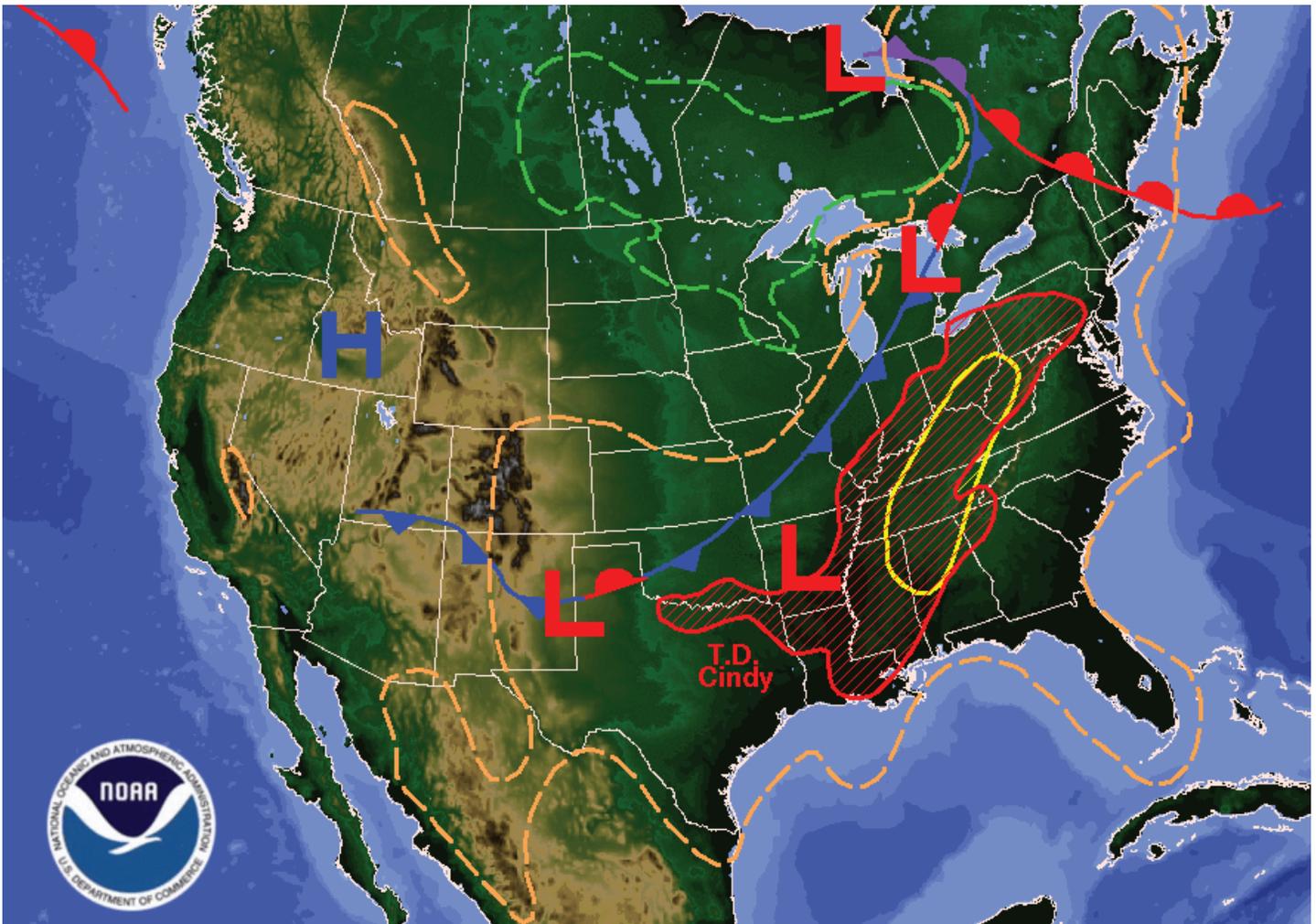
Precip to date in June: 2.52

Average Precip to date: 10.11

Precip Year to Date: 5.71

Sunset Tonight: 9:26 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:46 a.m.



### Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Fri, Jun 23, 2017, issued 6:24 AM EDT  
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center  
Prepared by McCreynolds with WPC/SPC/NHC forecasts

Rain  
Rain and T'Storms  
Rain and Snow  
Snow

Flash Flooding Possible (hatched)  
Severe T'Storms Possible (hatched)  
Freezing Rain Possible (hatched)  
Heavy Snow Possible (hatched)

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## THE SOURCE OF OUR SALVATION

An elderly man was sitting quietly in his rocking chair speaking softly to his grandson. "It took me forty years," he said, "to learn three simple truths. I would like you to learn them at an early age. One – I could do nothing to be victorious over my sins. Two – that God did not expect me to. And three – that Christ has done it all for me."

David taught those three simple truths centuries ago in one simple verse, "Victory comes from You, oh Lord."

A story is told of a prisoner, who with the help of his friends, planned an escape. Through careful planning they smuggled a gun into the prison yard and hid it. They informed him that a ladder would be up against the wall where the searchlight would not expose it. And they told him that a vehicle would be awaiting him at a certain hour.

"But," he asked, "how do I get out of my cell?" "That's up to you," they said. Obviously, he did not escape. He remained in his cell because He could not take the first step.

But our Lord has taken the first step in our salvation. He loved the world so very much that He gave His one and only Son to be our Savior. Now, we must do one of two things: receive Him or reject Him.

Our Lord is a seeking Lord who will save us from our sin through His salvation. It does belong to Him, but He willingly extends it to all of us.

Prayer: We thank You, Heavenly Father, for saving us by granting Your love, grace and mercy to us. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 3:8 From the LORD comes deliverance. May your blessing be on your people.

## News from the Associated Press

### SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

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

#### Mega Millions

12-20-53-66-74, Mega Ball: 11, Megaplier: 2

(twelve, twenty, fifty-three, sixty-six, seventy-four; Mega Ball: eleven; Megaplier: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$134 million

#### Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$79 million

### Amendment backers seek big changes to legislative elections

By JAMES NORD, Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Supporters of a proposed South Dakota constitutional amendment that would create a nonpartisan primary election for legislative candidates and put control over redrawing lawmakers' political districts in the hands of an independent commission are aiming to put the plan on the ballot next year.

Backers hope to start gathering signatures in August to put the proposed amendment to a vote in 2018, supporter Drey Samuelson said Friday. It would establish nonpartisan primaries for legislative hopefuls, remove their party labels from the ballot and create an independent commission to redraw state legislators' districts.

The proposal shares similarities with two constitutional amendments that voters rejected in 2016. But Samuelson sees an opportunity next year, saying the Republican-controlled state Legislature is unpopular among voters.

"I'm confident that they're ready for a change, and I believe that the table is set for us to make some substantial and beneficial changes in the political dynamic in South Dakota," said Samuelson, who served as chief of staff to former Democratic U.S. Sen. Tim Johnson.

Republican Party Chairman Dan Lederman didn't immediately return a telephone message requesting comment. Amendment supporters would have to submit nearly 28,000 valid signatures to the secretary of state by November 2017 for the amendment to appear on the 2018 ballot.

It would establish a nonpartisan legislative primary in which the top vote-getters would advance to the general election without displaying their party designations on either ballot, he said.

"A Legislature that was functioning well would pay much less attention to party and much more attention to solving people's problems," Samuelson said.

The amendment also calls for switching control of the legislative redistricting process from legislators to an independent commission of nine people, with no more than three from any one political party. Redistricting is the process of redrawing electoral district boundaries every 10 years to account for population changes.

Samuelson said the amendment would create more competitive legislative elections, make the Legislature function better and open up primary elections to more voters. In South Dakota, the Democratic primary is open to independents, while the Republican primary is closed.

Backers of a broader constitutional amendment that would move South Dakota to a top-two primary system for many political offices including governor are also trying to put that proposal before voters in 2018.

## Eco-group billboard blitz to greet Interior chief in Montana

By MATT VOLZ, Associated Press

HELENA, Mont. (AP) — Environmental groups plan to crash the homecoming in Montana next week of President Donald Trump's Interior Department secretary with billboards, television ads and speeches to pressure him on issues from national monuments to sage grouse.

Ryan Zinke is scheduled to address the Western Governors Association's annual conference Tuesday in the town of Whitefish, which he represented as a state lawmaker from 2009 to 2011.

He will be welcomed by billboards urging him not to touch the Upper Missouri River Breaks, one of two dozen national monuments he's reviewing to eliminate or scale back protections.

Television ads will air during the conference telling him to leave alone a conservation plan by the Obama administration and 11 Western states to protect the sage grouse, an imperiled bird.

Advocates will give speeches in a downtown Whitefish park the day before Zinke's address, calling on the interior chief to better protect public lands.

"Welcome home," said Larry Epstein, a member of group renting the billboards that supports the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument. "We hope to get the attention of Secretary Zinke and the Western governors."

Eleven governors, their staffs, lobbyists, business representatives and special interest groups will meet in the resort town near Glacier National Park on topics that include the Endangered Species Act, forest management and ties with Canada.

Zinke spokeswoman Heather Swift and the Department of Interior press office did not return email queries for comment.

Supporters of the Trump administration's plans to review and possibly loosen existing land and wildlife protections are dismayed by the heavy investment that environmentalists are making to confront Zinke on his home turf.

Ron Poertner, one of about 120 ranchers, farmers and landowners who live in or use the Upper Missouri River Breaks and favor reducing the size of the 590-square-mile national monument, said they can't compete with that level of organization and money.

"We're haying, we're still spraying weeds, we're still doing farm work," Poertner said. "To say, 'Let's take a bus and do some counter-protesting,' there's no way."

The Montana monument, created in 2001 just before President Bill Clinton left office, includes federal, state and private land that surrounds a 149-mile stretch of the Missouri River that is mostly unchanged since Lewis and Clark's Corps of Discovery traversed it in the early 1800s.

Zinke is reviewing it and 23 other monuments in a report that will recommend whether they should be resized or eliminated.

Opponents of changes, such as Epstein's Hold Our Ground group, say the review is a waste of taxpayer money by rehashing already settled arguments. Supporters like Poertner are worried they'll be squeezed off the land and say presidents have too much power to unilaterally designate national monuments.

Zinke's Interior Department also is reviewing the land-use policies implemented in 2015 as a way of preventing even stricter policies to protect the sage grouse under the Endangered Species Act.

The conservation group Western Values Project is launching a television ad campaign for the Western Governors Association meant to ratchet up pressure on both Zinke and Montana Gov. Steve Bullock.

"It appears Secretary Zinke wants to scrap all the work done by to Western communities, coalitions, sportsmen and women, wildlife managers, private landowners, and industry groups," Executive Director Chris Saeger said in a statement. "If Governor Bullock has an audience with Secretary Zinke next week, he must use it to insist that Interior continue with the sage-grouse plans."

## Local angel fund from Dakotas gets farm-tech app

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A North Dakota tech company is using a \$1.35 million angel investment fund in Sioux Falls to launch a new app for the agriculture industry.

Myriad Mobile of Fargo announced this month that it has raised \$1.5 million to launch an app that streamlines contracts between farmers and grain elevators, the Argus Leader (<http://argusne.ws/2rPsC4i>) reported.

"We liked that it was a more local-type industry and a different approach than a lot of people take in the farm-tech industry," said Matthew Paulson, chairman of Falls Angel Fund. "People that try to bring software to the ag space, a lot of them are from places that don't have strong agriculture industry, so they don't have the experience to talk to or work with farmers and build stuff to solve their problems."

Myriad CEO Jake Joraanstad said the company met the Falls Angel Fund team through the Innovation Expo in Sioux Falls and pitched them early in the hunt for investment.

"We pitched to them really early on, even before we knew how much money we were going to raise," he said. "So that was really valuable, working with them. We got to meet some of the investors in that angel fund. So we're happy with their participation."

The Falls Angel Fund is managed through the South Dakota Enterprise Institute. An angel investment fund helps finance local business start-ups that show potential for growth.

Joraanstad said that Myriad is preparing for a product launch and possible partner announcement later this month.

"A lot of people want to celebrate the money raised, but that's day zero," he said. "It's go-time at that point. You've got to take it to the next level now."

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

## Emergency CRP grazing authorized in the Dakotas and Montana

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — U.S. Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue has authorized emergency grazing on Conservation Reserve Program land in the Dakotas and Montana in response to drought.

Perdue says that without alternative forage options, ranchers could be devastated economically. The emergency grazing is authorized to begin immediately, and extends through Sept. 30 unless conditions improve.

Parts of all three states are experiencing severe or extreme drought.

U.S. Sen. John Hoeven says other federal drought aid also is available to ranchers in counties classified as being in extreme drought. The assistance is through the Agriculture Department's Livestock Forage Disaster Program.

Counties in extreme drought are immediately eligible. For counties in severe drought, eligibility begins after eight straight weeks of drought.

Online:

U.S. Drought Monitor: <http://bit.ly/2rIJOs6>

## Kansas jury awards \$218M to farmers in Syngenta GMO suit

By JIM SUHR, AP Business Writer

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — A Kansas federal jury awarded nearly \$218 million on Friday to farmers who sued Swiss agribusiness giant Syngenta over its introduction of a genetically engineered corn seed variety.

Syngenta vowed to appeal the verdict favoring four Kansas farmers representing roughly 7,300 growers from that state in what served as the first test case of tens of thousands of U.S. lawsuits assailing Syngenta's decision to introduce its Viptera seed strain to the U.S. market before China approved it for imports.

The Kansas trial and a Minnesota one next month involving about 60,000 cases are to serve as bellwether

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trials, providing guidance for how the complex web of litigation in state and federal courts could be resolved. Attorneys can see how juries react and determine whether to settle other cases or take them to trial.

"This is only the beginning," the Kansas farmers' attorneys said in a statement, calling Friday's verdict "great news" for Kansas and U.S. corn growers. "We look forward to pursuing justice for thousands more corn farmers in the months ahead."

Syngenta began selling Viptera in the U.S. for the 2011 growing season, but China didn't approve it until December 2014. The lawsuits allege Syngenta's move to market the seed variety before China's clearing of it for imports wrecked an increasingly important export market for U.S. corn, causing years of depressed corn prices. Court filings show Syngenta aggressively marketed the seeds even when it knew Chinese approval was going to be a problem.

Most of the farmers suing didn't grow Viptera, but China also rejected millions of metric tons of their grain because elevators and shippers typically mix grain from large numbers of suppliers, making it difficult to source corn that was free of the trait. So they say all farmers were hurt by the resulting price drop.

Experts speaking for the farmers who sued said they estimate the economic damage at about \$5 billion, though Syngenta has denied its actions caused any losses for farmers.

Friday's jury award, if upheld on appeal, would be dispersed to the more than 7,000 Kansas farmers in the class, minus unspecified attorneys' fees. But it remains unclear how much each victim ultimately will get, given that the payouts likely will be proportionate to such variables as the number of bushels each sold during a relative time period, said Don Downing, an attorney for the plaintiffs.

Syngenta said it was "disappointed" with Friday's outcome "because it will only serve to deny American farmers access to future technologies even when they are fully approved in the U.S."

"The case is without merit and we will move forward with an appeal and continue to defend the rights of American farmers to access safe and effective U.S.-approved technologies," the company said in a statement.

Calling Viptera "in full compliance with U.S. regulatory and legal requirements," Syngenta added that "American farmers shouldn't have to rely on a foreign government to decide what products they can use on their farms."

Syngenta said it invested more than \$100 million and 15 years in developing Viptera, which has a trait called MIR162 that protects against pests such as earworms, cutworms, armyworms and corn borers.

Court papers show that Syngenta initially assured stakeholders that China would approve MIR162 in time for the 2011 crop, but the date kept slipping. Some exporters sent shipments containing the trait to China anyway. After two years of accepting them, China began rejecting them in late 2013.

The Kansas trial came as ChemChina — a state-owned conglomerate also known as China National Chemical Corp. — is closing in on its \$43 billion acquisition of Syngenta. Chinese companies are engaged in a multibillion-dollar global buying spree to acquire technology and brands, a move to improve their competitive edge as explosive growth in their home economy slows.

## Mellette school is 2nd in state to approve armed staffers

MELLETTE, S.D. (AP) — A school in Mellette is the second in South Dakota to allow approved employees to carry guns.

The American News reports (<http://bit.ly/2t3nevE>) that the Northwestern Area School Board approved the move unanimously this month.

South Dakota lawmakers passed a school sentinel law in 2013, a few months after the deadly Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting in Connecticut.

The Tri-Valley School District last summer became the first district in the state to take advantage of the law.

Teachers or staff members need to go through an application process, including a mental health evaluation, and take the same training that law officers do before they can be a school sentinel.

Information from: Aberdeen American News, <http://www.aberdeennews.com>

## 2 accused in theft scheme at grain elevator in Witten

WITTEN, S.D. (AP) — A Witten man has admitted stealing from the grain elevator where he worked. The Daily Republic reports (<http://bit.ly/2rK6GoJ>) that 54-year-old William Whitaker was accused of loading \$9,000 worth of milo onto another person's truck without his supervisor's consent in February. Whitaker pleaded guilty Thursday to grand theft by embezzlement. He faces up to 10 years in prison and a \$20,000 fine when he's sentenced in August. The truck operator is charged with grand theft by receiving stolen property and is scheduled to appear in court in July.

Information from: The Daily Republic, <http://www.mitchellrepublic.com>

## 4-year-old hospitalized after 3-story fall in Aberdeen

ABERDEEN, S.D. (AP) — A 4-year-old child was flown to a Sioux Falls hospital after falling from a third-story apartment window in Aberdeen. The American News reports (<http://bit.ly/2sJe7h0>) that police responded to the scene shortly before 9 p.m. Wednesday. The investigation is ongoing and few details have been released, including who else was in the apartment at the time. Police Capt. Eric Duven says the extent of the child's injuries isn't known.

Information from: Aberdeen American News, <http://www.aberdeennews.com>

## North Dakota governor declares drought emergency

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — Gov. Doug Burgum has declared a drought emergency which allows the State Water Commission to reactivate a water supply assistance program for livestock producers in 26 counties. Drought conditions have worsened dramatically in North Dakota over the past week with about 40 percent of the state experiencing extreme or severe drought conditions with another 27 percent in moderate drought.

Burgum's executive order declares a drought emergency for 15 counties experiencing extreme drought and 11 adjacent counties. The water commission has \$250,000 available to assist eligible livestock producers with 50 percent cost-share assistance of up to \$3,500 per project.

The governor also ordered the North Dakota Department of Emergency Services, Department of Agriculture and other state agencies to work on a coordinated response to the state's drought.

## Family recalls loving nature of Seattle mom killed by police

By PHUONG LE, Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) — Charleena Lyles loved to sing and dance. She adored her four children. She always smiled, even when facing obstacles.

Friends and family members say the 30-year-old pregnant woman shot and killed by police this week was so much more than authorities' account of an unstable person who confronted two officers with kitchen knives and had previous run-ins with the law.

The Seattle woman was kind and caring, and "if you met her, you would be drawn in," said her older sister, Monika Williams.

"I don't care what she was going through or what anybody was trying to bring on her, she would hit it with a smile," Williams said.

Authorities noted the shooting happened less than two weeks after Lyles threatened officers with long metal shears, and family members expressed concerns about her mental health after that incident. Lyles

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also was arrested in 2014 for assault.

Williams described her sister as a strong, independent woman.

Lyles, whom relatives called "Leena," grew up in Seattle and was largely raising two boys and two girls on her own — including a 4-year girl with Down syndrome — but she had a supportive network of siblings, cousins, aunts and others, Williams said.

"Her whole life was her kids," said her father, Charles Lyles, who owns an income-tax preparation business and lives in Lancaster, California.

The youngest three children — ages 11, 4 and 1 — were home when Lyles called police Sunday morning to report a burglary.

Before arriving at Lyles' apartment, the responding officers discussed Lyles' June 5 encounter with police and noted an "officer safety caution" at the address. Two officers, rather than one, went to the apartment because of her prior history with police.

According to audio recordings released by police, Lyles and the officers can be heard calmly talking about someone taking her video game console.

But a confrontation erupted. There are sounds of rapid movement, the woman yelling "Get ready, (expletive)!" and the police repeatedly warning her to get back before five shots are fired.

The killing has prompted outrage among many, including Lyles' family, who questioned why the officers couldn't use nonlethal methods to subdue the petite woman, and suggested race played a role. Lyles was black; the officers were white.

"They're trying to portray her as someone who wanted police to kill her — which is a bold-face lie," her father said. "She called them for help. They ended up coming in and killing her."

Police and the mayor say the shooting will be investigated and under the watch of federal court monitoring team.

"This is a horrible tragedy on every front," Seattle Police Chief Kathleen O'Toole told KING-TV in Seattle. "We will get to the truth. We will leave no stone unturned. We're committed to that. We'll conduct this investigation thoroughly."

On June 5, Lyles was arrested and charged with obstruction and harassment after police say she refused officers' orders to drop metal shears. Lyles had called police to report a domestic disturbance at her apartment. She was released from jail on conditions, and her case was referred to mental-health court.

Over the past year, Lyles had struggled with depression but was seeking help, according to family members and King County District Court records. She met with a mental health counselor last fall, and this year saw a family therapist with her children several times, court records show.

Lyles was "going through some things in her life," said her cousin Kenny Isabell, a pastor.

"Her life wasn't perfect, like none of us are," he said. But she was attending his church regularly, and was making an effort to improve her life, Isabell said.

Lyles' father, Charles, said Lyles was devastated when her mother died in 2005. She lived with various relatives over the years and with him in California, where the kids had friends up and down the street where he lived.

She didn't have a home of her own until she recently moved into the apartment complex in northeast Seattle run by the nonprofit group Solid Ground. The family lived in permanent housing set aside for those who previously were homeless.

"She was so happy to get her own home," he said.

Charles Lyles said his daughter liked to take her children to carnivals and do fun things with them. But she also worried they would be taken from her because an abusive ex-boyfriend, the father of the youngest children, was causing problems for her.

Lyles' sister Tiffany Rogers told hundreds of mourners who gathered Tuesday night outside the apartment complex where Lyles was shot that she used to call Lyles every day. She said she will miss having that support.

Lyles' father said he wants justice for his daughter, who liked to dress up and enjoyed playing little jokes on him.

"She's a little bitty woman. And they shoot her to death in front of her kids?" he said. "They could have used other (less lethal) force."

## Hundreds evacuated from London towers as fire fallout widens

By SYLVIA HUI and DANICA KIRKA, Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — The scope of Britain's fire-safety crisis broadened Saturday as London officials scrambled to evacuate four public housing towers due to concerns about external cladding, fire doors and insulation around gas pipes.

Hundreds of residents hastily packed their bags and sought emergency shelter, with many angry and confused about the chaotic situation. Some refused to leave.

Camden Council said it decided to evacuate the buildings on the Chalcots Estate late Friday after fire inspectors reported that the blocks were "not safe for people to sleep in overnight." Inspectors uncovered problems with "gas insulation and door stops," which combined with the presence of flammable cladding meant residents had to leave immediately, council leader Georgia Gould said in a tweet.

The evacuation comes amid widening worries about the safety of high-rise apartment blocks across Britain following the inferno that engulfed Grenfell Tower in west London on June 14, killing at least 79 people. Public attention has focused on the external cladding material blamed for the rapid spread of that blaze — but now it appeared that multiple other fire risks have been identified in some blocks.

Britain's government said Saturday that cladding samples from 27 high-rise apartment blocks in cities including London, Manchester, Plymouth and Portsmouth have failed fire safety tests.

So far, Camden Council has been the only local authority known to have asked residents to leave as a precaution. It said about 650 apartments were evacuated, though initial reports had said that as many as 800 were affected.

"I know some residents are angry and upset, but I want to be very clear that Camden Council acted to protect them," Gould said in a statement. "Grenfell changed everything, and when told our blocks were unsafe to remain in, we acted."

Residents — including families with babies and elderly relatives — trooped out of the buildings Friday night with suitcases and plastic bags stuffed with clothes as council workers guided them to a local leisure center, where some spent the night on inflatable mattresses packed into a gym. Others were being put up in hotels and other housing projects.

The council said residents would be out of their homes for three to four weeks while it completes fire-safety upgrades.

Many residents complained of a lack of information and confusion. Officials first announced the evacuation of one building, then expanded it to five and later reduced it to four. Some said they learned about the evacuation on television news before officials came knocking on doors.

Renee Williams, 90, who has lived in Taplow tower since 1968, told Britain's Press Association: "No official came and told us what's going on, I saw it on the TV so I packed an overnight bag.

"It's unbelievable. I understand that it's for our safety but they can't just ask us to evacuate with such short notice. There's no organization and it's chaos," she added.

Dozens refused to leave their homes. Carl McDowell, 31, said he took one look at the inflatable beds offered on the floor of the leisure center and went back to his own apartment.

Flammable external cladding that is widely used to provide insulation and enhance the appearance of buildings has been identified as the culprit in the Grenfell disaster. But fire-safety experts have said the blaze was probably due to a string of failures, not just the cladding.

Police said Friday that they were considering filing manslaughter charges in the Grenfell disaster and they were conducting a wide-ranging investigation that will look at everything that contributed to it.

The Metropolitan Police said cladding attached to the 24-story public housing project during a recent renovation failed safety tests conducted by investigators, and that they have seized documents from a number of organizations.

"We are looking at every criminal offense from manslaughter onwards," Detective Superintendent Fiona McCormack told reporters. "We are looking at all health and safety and fire safety offenses, and we are reviewing every company at the moment involved in the building and refurbishment of Grenfell Tower."

The government has ordered an immediate examination of the refrigerator model that started the blaze. McCormack said the Hotpoint model FF175BP refrigerator-freezer had not been subject to any product recalls before the fire.

Hotpoint said it was working with authorities to examine the appliance, adding "words cannot express our sorrow at this terrible tragedy."

The government has called on all building owners, public and private, to submit samples of cladding material used on their buildings for testing.

Fears about cladding are not limited to apartment buildings. One hotel chain, Premier Inn, is calling in experts to make certain its properties meet safety regulations.

Police says 79 people are either dead or missing and presumed dead in the blaze, although that number may change. To encourage cooperation, Prime Minister Theresa May said the government won't penalize any fire survivors who were in the country illegally.

Sheila Norman-Culp, Gregory Katz and Alastair J. Grant contributed to this report

## Over 120 people buried by massive southwest China landslide

By GILLIAN WONG, Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — More than 120 people were buried by a landslide that caused huge rocks and a mass of earth to come crashing into their homes in a mountain village in southwestern China early Saturday, officials said.

The landslide, which came from a mountain, engulfed a cluster of 62 homes and a hotel in the village of Xinmo in Mao County at about 6 a.m., the Sichuan provincial government said. Officials said 1.6 kilometers (1 mile) of road were buried in the disaster.

"It's the biggest landslide to hit this area since the Wenchuan earthquake," Wang Yongbo, an official leading one of the rescue efforts, told state broadcaster China Central Television. Wang was referring to China's deadliest earthquake this century, a magnitude 7.9 temblor that struck Sichuan province in May 2008, killing nearly 90,000 people.

The provincial government said more than 120 people were buried by the landslide. CCTV cited a rescuer as saying five bodies had been found.

Rescuers pulled out three people, two of whom had survived, the official Sichuan Daily newspaper said on its microblog. The paper also said a family of three, including a month-old baby, managed to escape just as the landslide started to hit their house.

Qiao Dashuai told CCTV that the baby saved the family because he was woken up by the child's crying and was going to change the baby's diaper when he heard a noise that alerted him to the landslide.

"We heard a strange noise at the back of our house, and it was rather loud," Qiao said. "Wind was coming into the room so I wanted to close the door. When we came out, water flow swept us away instantly." He said they struggled against the flood of water until they met medical workers who took them to a hospital. Qiao said his parents and other relatives had not been found.

Mao County, or Maoxian, sits on the eastern margin of the Tibetan plateau and is home to about 110,000 people, according to the government's website. Most residents are of the Qiang ethnic minority. The village is known locally for tourism, and Chinese reports said it was unclear if tourists were among those buried by the landslide.

The landslide blocked a 2-kilometer (1.2-mile) section of a river. The provincial government said on its website that an estimated 8 million cubic meters (282 million cubic feet) of earth and rock — equivalent to more than 3,000 Olympic-sized swimming pools — had slid down the mountain.

Experts told CCTV that the landslide was likely triggered by rain. A meteorologist interviewed by CCTV

said there was light rain in the area that would continue for a few days.

The Sichuan Daily said rescuers made contact with a villager buried under the rubble who answered her cellphone when they called and burst into tears. The woman was in the bedroom of her home when the landslide hit the village, and rescuers were trying to reach her, the report said.

Search and rescue efforts were underway involving more than 400 workers, including police. CCTV showed footage of rescuers in bright orange uniforms using earth movers and excavators but also relying on ropes to pull at huge rocks and shovels to dig up the dirt.

Provincial police sent 500 rescuers with two dozen sniffer dogs to the site, the official Xinhua News Agency reported.

## **Suicide bomber blows himself up as Saudis foil Mecca plot**

**By ABDULLAH AL-SHIHRI and JON GAMBRELL, Associated Press**

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia (AP) — A suicide bomber blew himself up near the Grand Mosque in Mecca as police disrupted a plot to target the holiest site in Islam just as the fasting month of Ramadan ends, Saudi security forces said Saturday.

The Interior Ministry said it launched a raid around Jiddah, as well as two areas in Mecca itself, including the Ajjad Al-Masafi neighborhood, located near the Grand Mosque.

There, police said they engaged in a shootout at a three-story house with a suicide bomber, who blew himself up and caused the building to collapse. He was killed, while the blast wounded six foreigners and five members of security forces, according to the Interior Ministry's statement. Five others were arrested, including a woman, it said.

Saudi state television aired footage after the raid Friday near the Grand Mosque, showing police and rescue personnel running through the neighborhood's narrow streets. The blast demolished the building, its walls crushing a parked car. Nearby structures appeared to be peppered with shrapnel and bullet holes.

The Interior Ministry said the thwarted "terrorist plan" would have violated "all sanctities by targeting the security of the Grand Mosque, the holiest place on Earth."

"They obeyed their evil and corrupt self-serving schemes managed from abroad whose aim is to destabilize the security and stability of this blessed country," it said.

The ministry did not name the group involved in the attack. The ultraconservative Sunni kingdom battled an al-Qaida insurgency for years and more recently has faced attacks from a local branch of the Islamic State group. Neither group immediately claimed involvement, though IS sympathizers online have urged more attacks as an offensive in Iraq slowly squeezes the extremists out of Mosul and their de facto capital of Raqqa in Syria comes under daily bombing from a U.S.-led coalition.

The disrupted attack comes at a sensitive time in Saudi Arabia. King Salman earlier this week short-circuited the kingdom's succession by making his son, Defense Minister Mohammed bin Salman, first in line to the throne.

The newly appointed 31-year-old crown prince is the architect of Saudi Arabia's stalemated war in Yemen against Shiite rebels. He has also offered aggressive comments about the kingdom confronting Shiite power Iran.

Iran's Foreign Ministry on Saturday condemned the Mecca plot and said it remains willing to work with other countries in confronting terrorism.

Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries have cut diplomatic ties to neighboring Qatar and are trying to isolate the energy-rich country over its alleged support of militants and ties to Iran. Qatar long has denied those allegations.

As the Interior Ministry announced the raid, over 1 million Muslim faithful prayed at the Prophet's Mosque in Medina to mark the end of Ramadan. In July 2016, a suicide bombing there killed four members of Saudi Arabia's security forces.

Millions of Muslims from around the world visit the mosque, the burial site of the Prophet Muhammad, every year as part of their pilgrimage. The same day in July, separate suicide bomb attacks targeted a

Shiite mosque in eastern Saudi Arabia and near the U.S. Consulate in Jiddah.

The Grand Mosque has been the target of militants before, in part because it represents a symbol of the ruling Al Saud family's clout in the Islamic world. The Saudi monarch bears the title of "custodian of the two holy mosques."

In 1979, some 250 militants seized the mosque and held it for two weeks as they demanded the royal family abdicate the throne. When Saudi troops stormed the mosque, the official death toll was 229, including extremists and soldiers.

Gambrell reported from Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Associated Press writer Amir Vahdat in Tehran, Iran, contributed to this report.

## **AP sources: Military to seek delay on transgender enlistees**

**By LOLITA C. BALDOR, Associated Press**

WASHINGTON (AP) — Military chiefs will seek a six-month delay before letting transgender people enlist in their services, officials said Friday.

After meetings this week, the service leaders hammered out an agreement that rejected Army and Air Force requests for a two-year wait and reflected broader concerns that a longer delay would trigger criticism on Capitol Hill, officials familiar with the talks told The Associated Press.

The new request for a delay will go to Defense Secretary Jim Mattis for a final decision, said the officials, who weren't authorized to discuss the internal deliberations publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Transgender servicemembers have been able to serve openly in the military since last year, when former Defense Secretary Ash Carter ended the ban, declaring it the right thing to do. Since Oct. 1, transgender troops have been able to receive medical care and start formally changing their gender identifications in the Pentagon's personnel system.

But Carter also gave the services until July 1 to develop policies to allow people already identifying as transgender to newly join the military, if they meet physical, medical and other standards, and have been stable in their identified genders for 18 months. The military chiefs had said they needed time to study the issue and its effects on the readiness of the force before taking that step.

Officials said Friday that the chiefs believe the extra half-year would give the four military services time to gauge if currently serving transgender troops are facing problems and what necessary changes the military bases might have to make.

The chiefs of the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps discussed the matter with Deputy Defense Secretary Robert Work on Thursday, officials said.

Dana White, the Pentagon's chief spokeswoman, said there have been ongoing discussions with the service chiefs and a recommendation is expected, but she declined to disclose any details.

"It's been a very deliberative process," she said. "The deputy secretary of defense has not submitted a recommendation to the secretary yet and so no decision has been made."

Stephen Peters, spokesman for Human Rights Campaign, said the group is disappointed with the delay request.

"Each day that passes without implementing the final piece of this important policy harms our military readiness and restricts the Armed Forces' ability to recruit the best and the brightest," said Peters, a Marine veteran. "There are thousands of transgender service members openly and proudly serving our nation today, and as they've proven time and time again, what matters is the ability to get the job done — not their gender identity."

Already, there are as many as 250 servicemembers in the process of transitioning to their preferred genders or who have been approved to formally change gender within the Pentagon's personnel system, according to several defense officials.

According to several officials familiar with the matter, three of the four services wanted more time. In recent weeks, Navy officials suggested they would be ready to begin enlistment in July but asked for a one-year delay, largely to accommodate a request from the Marine Corps for more time, officials said. The

Navy secretary also oversees the Marine Corps.

The Army and Air Force wanted a two-year delay to further study the issue, said the officials, who were not authorized to talk about the internal discussion publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Officials said there was a broad recognition that allowing transgender individuals to enlist affects each service differently. They described the biggest challenge as the infantry. They said the discussions aimed at a solution that would give recruits the best chance of succeeding, while ensuring the services maintain the best standards for entry into the military.

Service chiefs will also require that transgender recruits be stable in their preferred genders for at least two years, an increase from Carter's earlier plan to allow 18 months, the officials said. The chiefs also want to review the policy in a year to see how things are working, the officials said.

Key concerns are whether currently enlisted troops have had medical or other issues that cause delays or problems with their ability to deploy or meet physical or other standards for their jobs. Military leaders also want to review how transgender troops are treated, if they're discriminated against or have had disciplinary problems, the officials said.

Gen. Joseph Dunford, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told a Senate committee last week there have been some issues identified with recruiting transgender individuals that "some of the service chiefs believe need to be resolved before we move forward." He said Mattis is reviewing the matter.

The military services have various ways of counting the number of transgender troops currently serving. The Pentagon has refused to release any data. But officials said there are 42 servicemembers across the Army, including the National Guard and Reserve, who have been approved to change their gender identities in the personnel system. At least 40 more are in the process of transitioning, they said.

Officials said there are about 160 sailors in the Navy who are somewhere in the process of gender transition. That could include counseling, hormone treatment or gender reassignment surgery. And about "a handful" of Marines have come forward to seek medical care involving gender transition, and there are possibly others going through the process with their commanders, officials said.

The Air Force refused to release any numbers, and other officials did not know those details.

A RAND study found that there are between 2,500 and 7,000 transgender service members in the active duty military, and another 1,500 to 4,000 in the reserves.

## Consumer issues stemming from the GOP health care initiative

By RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Republicans in full control of government are on the brink of history-making changes to the nation's health care system. The impact for consumers would go well beyond "Obamacare."

Former President Barack Obama's signature law is usually associated with subsidized insurance markets like HealthCare.gov. But the Affordable Care Act also expanded Medicaid.

Not only would the GOP legislation scale back coverage through the insurance markets and phase out the Medicaid expansion, it would also make fundamental changes to the broader Medicaid program. The federal-state program covers low-income people, from newborns to elderly nursing home residents, from special-needs kids to young adults caught in the opioid epidemic.

House Republicans have passed their health care bill, and Senate GOP leaders are driving toward a vote next week. President Donald Trump is waiting, eager to deliver on a campaign promise to repeal the law.

Against fast-moving developments, a look at some major issues for consumers.

### WHY MEDICAID MATTERS

As health care costs have kept climbing, employers cut back on coverage, and Medicaid passed Medicare as the nation's largest public insurance program. It now covers about 70 million people, including children and able-bodied adults mostly served by private managed care plans.

The GOP's biggest Medicaid change involves limiting future federal financing. Since its inception, Medicaid has been an open-ended entitlement, with Washington matching a share of what each state spends. Instead, Republicans propose a per-beneficiary cap.

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In addition, the GOP would phase out added financing that Obama's law provided as an incentive for states to expand the program and cover more low-income adults. About 11 million are covered by the expansion.

The Congressional Budget Office estimated the House bill would reduce federal Medicaid spending by \$834 billion over 10 years, and the program would cover about 14 million fewer people by 2026, a 17 percent reduction.

Governors of both parties have warned Congress that would mean a cost shift to states that undermines coverage for the vulnerable.

Medicaid limits got very little attention in the 2016 presidential campaign. The idea was a relatively late addition to Trump's talking points. Indeed, candidate Trump had started out promising no cuts to Social Security, Medicare or Medicaid.

Economist Douglas Holtz-Eakin, a longtime GOP adviser, says the Republican approach is "180 degrees different in its economic and budgetary philosophy," from the course steered by Obama. The Medicaid limit would move the nation closer to putting public health care programs on a budget, fiscal discipline that conservatives say is long overdue.

But the human consequences could be politically volatile. "No one wins on health care policy," observed Holtz-Eakin.

## WHAT DOCTORS ARE SAYING

Groups representing doctors and hospitals are overwhelmingly opposed to the Republican approach, because it's likely to result in millions more uninsured people. Consumer organizations like AARP are also opposed.

Under Obama, the nation's uninsured rate dropped below 9 percent, a historic low. Progress has stalled, partly because "Obamacare" is politically divisive. Now, the uninsured rate may start climbing again, because both the House and Senate bills cut federal financing and repeal an unpopular requirement to carry health insurance.

It "would have a profoundly negative impact on Americans," said John Meigs, president of the American Academy of Family Physicians.

Some Republicans argue that a Medicaid card or an "Obamacare" policy means little because either the doctor doesn't accept notoriously low Medicaid fees, or high deductibles under the health law keep patients from coming in.

But doctors see a health insurance card as a ticket into the system, so patients can be screened for chronic conditions that can ultimately lead to serious illnesses. Obama's law made many preventive services free of charge to the patient.

Dr. Mott Blair of Wallace, N.C., recalls a patient who got a colonoscopy that found a polyp, which undetected could have led to colon cancer.

"Now we are able to bring them in and get their blood sugars down, their blood pressure down," Blair said in a recent interview. "They're not going to have a disastrous complication like a stroke or a heart attack, at least not for the foreseeable future."

## PRIVATE INSURANCE CHANGES

Republicans would make no significant changes to employer-provided coverage, which remains the mainstay of private insurance.

They focus instead on the market for individual policies, which Obama's ACA sought to reform by providing subsidies, setting requirements for comprehensive coverage, and creating online markets where consumers could compare plans. An estimated 17 million to 20 million people have individual policies. About 10 million are in the ACA's markets.

"Obamacare's" results have been mixed, with lower enrollment than expected, big losses for many insurers, and sharp premium increases. The situation varies from state to state, with healthy markets in some and others struggling to hang on to insurers. Consumers who are not entitled to subsidies can face shockingly high premiums.

Both the House and Senate bills would keep subsidies for private insurance, although with considerably less money. The House and Senate formulas for subsidies differ. States would be able to seek waivers from federal insurance requirements.

The Senate bill takes immediate steps to stabilize insurance markets for the next two years.

Over the long run, premiums for younger people are expected to come down. But older adults and people who require comprehensive coverage are likely to pay more.

"Low-income people will end up paying higher premiums for plans that have bigger deductibles, compared to today," said Larry Levitt of the nonpartisan Kaiser Family Foundation, commenting on the Senate bill. "Older people who are now getting premium subsidies would get substantially less help, but younger people would get more."

## 5 GOP senators now oppose health care bill as written

By ALAN FRAM and REGINA GARCIA CANO, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Nevada Republican Dean Heller became the fifth GOP senator to declare his opposition to the party's banner legislation to scuttle much of Barack Obama's health care overhaul on Friday, more than enough to sink the measure and deliver a stinging rebuke to President Donald Trump unless some of them can be brought aboard.

Echoing the other four, Heller said he opposes the measure "in this form" but does not rule out backing a version that is changed to his liking. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., has said he's willing to alter the measure to attract support, and next week promises plenty of back-room bargaining as he tries pushing a final package through his chamber.

Nonetheless, Heller's announcement underscores the scant margin of error Republican leaders must deal with. Facing unanimous Democratic opposition, McConnell can afford to lose just two of the 52 GOP senators and still prevail.

Besides the five who've announced outright opposition, several other GOP senators — conservatives and moderates — have declined to commit to the new overhaul. The measure resembles legislation the House approved last month that the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office said would mean 23 million additional uninsured people within a decade and that recent polling shows is viewed favorably by only around 1 in 4 Americans.

Heller, facing a competitive re-election battle next year, said he was opposing the legislation because of the cuts it would make in Medicaid. The federal-state program provides health care to the poor, disabled and many nursing home patients.

The Senate bill would also erase the tax penalties Obama's 2010 law imposes on people who don't purchase insurance. It would allow insurers to cover fewer benefits and repeal tax boosts on wealthier people that help finance the statute's expanded coverage.

The Senate legislation would phase out extra federal money Nevada and 30 other states receive for expanding Medicaid to additional low earners. It would also slap annual spending caps on the overall Medicaid program, which since its inception in 1965 has provided states with unlimited money to cover eligible costs.

"I cannot support a piece of legislation that takes insurance away from tens of millions of Americans and tens of thousands of Nevadans," Heller said.

Trump has spoken favorably about both the House-passed bill and the Senate version unveiled this week, though he declared several times as he ramped up his campaign for the presidency that he would not cut Medicaid.

Heller said that to win his vote, GOP leaders would have to "protect Medicaid expansion states" from the bill's current cuts.

"It's going to be very difficult to get me to a yes," he said, noting that conservative Republican senators would likely be reluctant to add spending back to the measure.

Heller spoke at a news conference in Las Vegas with Nevada Gov. Brian Sandoval, a Republican who has

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also assailed the House and Senate health care bills for cutting Medicaid. The state has added 200,000 more people to its program under the Obama overhaul.

Sandoval said the Senate bill "is something that needs to change." It would be politically difficult for Heller to take a different stance on the measure from the popular Sandoval.

Heller got an opponent for next year when first-year Democratic Rep. Jacky Rosen announced this week she would seek his Senate seat.

Just hours after McConnell released the 142-page legislation on Thursday, four conservatives said they opposed it. They were Sens. Ron Johnson of Wisconsin, Mike Lee of Utah, Rand Paul of Kentucky and Ted Cruz of Texas.

Underscoring the sensitivity of the bill, Sen. Joni Ernst, R-Iowa, who has not suggested she opposes the measure, declined to comment on its components when asked at a news conference Friday.

"It was just released yesterday. So, we have 142 pages to go through," she said.

Asked about the bill's impact on Medicaid insurance coverage for lower-income Iowans, Ernst said, "I wouldn't say they are losing it." Iowa opted to expand, and has added more than 150,000 people to its rolls since 2014.

Under special rules McConnell is using that will block Democrats from using a filibuster to kill the bill, the legislation cannot include provisions that make policy changes that don't primarily affect the budget. The Senate parliamentarian will make that decision.

Democrats hope to use those rules to erase some language from the bill, including a section barring consumers from using the measure's health care tax credits to buy insurance that covers abortions.

Realizing they're outnumbered, Democrats and their liberal allies were planning events around the U.S. over the next few days aimed at building public opposition to the bill.

In one instance, Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., and MoveOn.org were planning weekend rallies in Pennsylvania, Ohio and West Virginia. Each state has expanded Medicaid and has a GOP senator.

Regina Garcia Cano reported from Las Vegas. Associated Press writer Thomas Beaumont in Des Moines, Iowa, contributed to this report.

## Mueller and Comey not as close as Trump and others suggest

By ERIC TUCKER and JAKE PEARSON, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump and his associates are trying to draw attention to the relationship between special counsel Robert Mueller and former FBI Director James Comey. It appears that Trump's description of the two as "very, very good friends" isn't rooted in reality.

Mueller and Comey served together in the Justice Department during the George W. Bush administration. They're not known to be especially close friends. A former federal prosecutor, David Kelley, says Mueller and Comey haven't visited each other's homes and rarely shared a meal together.

Legal experts say whatever connection they do have doesn't come close to meriting Mueller's removal as special counsel.

Mueller is in charge of the Russia investigation that has expanded to include Trump's firing of Comey. Trump has called the Russia probe a "witch hunt."

## California governor stops parole for Charles Manson follower

By ANDREW DALTON, Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — California Gov. Jerry Brown on Friday night blocked parole for Charles Manson follower and convicted killer Bruce Davis.

Brown's rejection issued late Friday night is the fifth time Davis has been recommended for parole by a state panel only to see it blocked by a governor, and continues Brown's unflinching pattern of refusing to allow anyone from Manson's "family" to be freed.

On Feb. 1, the parole panel recommended release for the 74-year-old Davis, who is serving a life sen-

tence for the 1969 slayings of musician Gary Hinman and stuntman Donald "Shorty" Shea. Davis was not involved in the more notorious killings of actress Sharon Tate and six others by Manson's group.

Brown in his written decision acknowledges the factors that led the board to recommend parole for Davis: His efforts to improve himself, his academic progress, and 25 years with no discipline for misconduct.

But he said these things are "outweighed by negative factors that demonstrate he remains unsuitable for parole.

"These cult murders have left an indelible mark on the public — the Manson Family is still feared to this day," Brown wrote. "Incredibly heinous and cruel offenses like these constitute the 'rare circumstances' in which the crime alone can justify a denial of parole."

Also, Brown added "his continued minimization of his own violence and his role in the Manson Family further shows that he remains an unreasonable risk to the public."

The governor's decision came a week before the deadline.

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger also rejected Davis' parole bid before Brown made a common ritual of it. A message left with Davis lawyer Michael Beckman was not immediately returned.

Davis is serving his time at the California Men's Colony at San Luis Obispo.

During the half-century since the slayings, parole panels decided five times that Davis is no longer a public safety risk. Officials have cited his age and good behavior behind bars that includes earning a doctoral degree and ministering to other inmates.

Davis testified at his 2014 hearing that he attacked Shea with a knife and held a gun on Hinman while Manson cut Hinman's face with a sword.

"I wanted to be Charlie's favorite guy," he said then.

Beckman, who has been fighting for years for the release of Davis, said in February that his client is the most rehabilitated prisoner among the 2,000 he is representing in the penal system.

"There's no one even a close second," Beckman said.

On Thursday, California officials denied parole for convicted killer and Manson follower Patricia Krenwickel.

## After demands aired, solution to Qatar crisis seems far off

By JOSH LEDERMAN and ADAM SCHRECK, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Faced with a sweeping set of demands, Qatar insisted Friday it can indefinitely survive the economic and diplomatic steps its neighbors have taken to try to pressure it into compliance, even as a top Emirati official warned the tiny country to brace for a long-term economic squeeze.

Given 10 days to make a decision, Qatar said it was reviewing the specific concessions demanded of the tiny Persian Gulf nation, which include shuttering Al-Jazeera and cutting ties to the Muslim Brotherhood. But Qatari officials didn't budge from their previous insistence that they won't sit down with Saudi Arabia and other Arab nations to negotiate an end to the crisis while under siege.

"I can assure you that our situation today is very comfortable," Qatari Ambassador to the U.S. Meshal bin Hamad Al Thani told The Associated Press. "Qatar could continue forever like that with no problems."

Asked whether Qatar felt pressure to resolve the crisis quickly, he said: "Not at all."

As the United States stepped back from any central mediating role, all sides seemed to be settling in for a potentially protracted crisis. Qatar's neighbors insisted their 13-point list of demands was their bottom line, not a starting point for negotiations.

If Qatar refuses to comply by the deadline, the Arab countries signaled, they'll continue to restrict its access to land, sea and air routes indefinitely, as economic pressure mounts on Qatar.

"The measures that have been taken are there to stay until there is a long-term solution to the issue," Emirati Ambassador to the U.S. Yousef al-Otaiba said in an interview. Suggesting the penalties would only be economic and diplomatic, he said "there is no military element to this whatsoever."

Having urged Qatar's neighbors to come up with "reasonable and actionable" demands, the U.S. sought to distance itself from the crisis the day after the Arab countries issued a list that included several provisions Qatar had already declared it could not or would not accept. But the ultimatum was quickly rejected

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by Qatar's ally, Turkey, and blasted as an assault on free speech by Al-Jazeera, the Qatari broadcaster that the gas-rich country's neighbors are demanding be shut down.

The demands from the Saudis, the Emiratis, the Egyptians and the Bahrainis amount to a call for a sweeping overhaul of Qatar's foreign policy and natural gas-funded influence peddling in the region. Complying would force Qatar to bring its policies in line with the regional vision of Saudi Arabia, the Middle East's biggest economy and gatekeeper of Qatar's only land border.

"This reflects basically an attempt from these countries to suppress free media and also undermine our sovereignty," said Al Thani, the Qatari envoy. "They are trying to impose their views on how the issues need to be dealt with in the Middle East."

"They are bullies," he added.

The demands include shutting news outlets, including Al-Jazeera and its affiliates; curbing diplomatic relations with Iran; and severing all ties with Islamist groups including the Muslim Brotherhood. The United Arab Emirates said the list was intended to be confidential. The AP obtained a copy from one of the countries involved in the dispute.

The four countries cut ties with Qatar earlier this month over allegations that it funds terrorism — an accusation President Donald Trump has echoed. Qatar vehemently denies funding or supporting extremism but acknowledges that it allows members of some extremist groups such as Hamas to live in Qatar, arguing that fostering dialogue is key to resolving global conflicts.

The move by Qatar's neighbors has left it under a de facto blockade. Although residents made a run on the supermarket in the days after the crisis erupted, the situation has since calmed as Qatar secured alternative sources of imported food from Turkey and elsewhere.

Yet resisting the demands could prove difficult.

"The four states can afford to wait, but Qatar cannot," said Fawaz Gerges, a Middle East expert at the London School of Economics. "This crisis could threaten the political stability of the ruling family in Qatar in the long term if it lasts."

Secretary of State Rex Tillerson has tried to mediate and earlier this week called on the Arab nations to limit themselves to "reasonable and actionable" demands. That call appeared to have been roundly ignored, and it was the Kuwaitis — who also offered to mediate — who delivered the list Thursday to Qatar.

"This is an Arab issue that requires an Arab solution," Otaiba said. "That's why the Kuwaitis will take the lead in the negotiation."

That's just fine, the U.S. said. At the White House, spokesman Sean Spicer called it a "family issue" among Arab states and declined to say whether the newly articulated demands were legitimate.

"This is something that they want to and should work out for themselves," Spicer said.

Thrust into the middle of the crisis, the head of Al-Jazeera's English language service said the network remained committed to continuing its broadcasts.

"Any call to close to down or curtail Al-Jazeera is nothing but an attempt to muzzle a voice of democracy in the region and suppress freedom of expression," he said by phone.

Underscoring the growing seriousness of the crisis, state-run Qatar Petroleum acknowledged Friday that some critically important employees "may have been asked to postpone" trips abroad "for operational reasons" due to the embargo. It described the move as "a very limited measure that could take place in any oil and gas operating company" to ensure uninterrupted supplies to customers.

Qatar's neighbors are also demanding that it:

- Curb diplomatic ties with Iran, and limit trade and commerce.
- Stop funding other news outlets, including Arabi21, Al-Araby Al-Jadeed and Middle East Eye.
- Hand over "terrorist figures" and wanted individuals from the four countries.
- Stop all means of funding for groups or people designated by foreign countries as terrorists.
- Pay an unspecified sum in reparations.
- Stop all contacts with the political opposition in Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Egypt and Bahrain.

Schreck reported from Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Follow Josh Lederman on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/joshledermanAP>.  
Follow Adam Schreck on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/adamschreck](http://www.twitter.com/adamschreck).

## Suicide bomber blows himself up as Saudis foil Mecca plot

By **ABDULLAH AL-SHIHRI and JON GAMBRELL, Associated Press**

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia (AP) — A suicide bomber blew himself up near the Grand Mosque at Mecca as police disrupted a plot to target the holiest site in Islam just as the fasting month of Ramadan ends, Saudi security forces said Saturday.

The Interior Ministry said it launched a raid around Jiddah, as well as two areas in Mecca itself, including the Ajyad Al-Masafi neighborhood, located near the Grand Mosque.

There, police said they engaged in a shootout at a three-story house a suicide bomber, who blew himself up and led to the building's collapse. He was killed while the blast wounded six foreigners and five members of security forces, according to the Interior Ministry's statement. Five others were arrested, including a woman, it said.

Saudi state television aired footage after the raid Friday near the Grand Mosque, showing police and rescue personnel running through the neighborhood's narrow streets. The blast demolished the building, its walls crushing a parked car as what appeared to be shrapnel and bullet holes peppered nearby structures.

The Interior Ministry "confirms that this terrorist network, whose terrorist plan was thwarted, violated, in what they would have perpetrated, all sanctities by targeting the security of the Grand Mosque, the holiest place on Earth."

"They obeyed their evil and corrupt self-serving schemes managed from abroad whose aim is to destabilize the security and stability of this blessed country," the statement said.

The ministry did not name the group involved in the attack. The ultraconservative Sunni kingdom battled an al-Qaida insurgency for years and more recently has faced attacks from a local branch of the Islamic State group. Neither group immediately claimed those arrested, though Islamic State sympathizers online have urged more attacks as an offensive in Iraq slowly squeezes the extremists out of Mosul and their de facto capital of Raqqa in Syria comes under daily bombing from a U.S.-led coalition.

The disrupted attack comes at a sensitive time in Saudi Arabia as King Salman earlier this week short-circuited the kingdom's succession by making his son, Defense Minister Mohammed bin Salman, first in line to the throne. The newly appointed crown prince, 31 years old, is the architect of Saudi Arabia's war in Yemen against Shiite rebels, now stalemated. He has also offered aggressive comments about the kingdom confronting Shiite power Iran.

Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries have cut diplomatic ties to neighboring Qatar and are trying to isolate the energy-rich tiny country over its alleged support of militants and ties to Iran. Qatar long has denied those allegations.

As the Interior Ministry announced the raid, over 1 million Muslim faithful prayed at the Prophet's Mosque in Medina to mark the end of Ramadan. In July 2016, a suicide bombing there killed four members of Saudi Arabia's security forces. Millions of Muslims from around the world visit the mosque, the burial site of the Prophet Muhammad, every year as part of their pilgrimage to Mecca. The same day in July, separate suicide bomb attacks targeted a Shiite mosque in eastern Saudi Arabia and near the U.S. Consulate in Jiddah.

The Grand Mosque has been the target of militants before, in part as it represents a symbol of the ruling Al Saud family's clout in the Islamic world. King Salman is known as the "custodian of the two holy mosques," a title used by the monarchs before him as well.

In 1979, some 250 militants seized the mosque and held it for two weeks as they demanded the royal family abdicate the throne. When Saudi troops stormed the mosque, the official death toll was 229, including extremists and soldiers.

Gambrell reported from Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

## Huge, homely mastiff named Martha wins world's ugliest dog

By LINDA WANG, Associated Press

PETALUMA, Calif. (AP) — Martha is big, ugly, lazy and gassy. And a world champion.

In a competition annually dominated by the old, the tiny, and the hairless, the 3-year-old, 125-pound Neapolitan Mastiff used her lollygagging youth to win the 29th annual World's Ugliest Dog Contest.

She was a favorite of the Northern California crowd from the start, often plopping down on her side on stage with her droopy face spread across the ground when she was supposed to be showing off. The judges didn't even need to hear her signature snore to give her the award.

"Do you know you just won the World's Ugliest Dog Contest?" asked Kerry Sanders of NBC News, one of three judges who gave Martha the crown. Her handler Shirley Zindler answered for her: "I'd gloat, but I need a nap."

Martha lumbered away with \$1,500, a flashy trophy and a trip to New York for media appearances, all things she could hardly care less about.

The dog, from nearby Sebastopol, was rescued when she was nearly blind from neglect by the Dogwood Animal Rescue Project in Sonoma County, where the contest was held. After several surgeries, she can now see again, Zindler said.

The only animal in this year's contest too big to be held by her handler, Martha beat out 13 other dogs, most of them the kind of older, smaller dogs who win here.

Moe, a 16-year-old Brussels Griffon-pug mix from Santa Rosa, California, who was the oldest in the competition, came in second. He had lost his hearing and sight but his sense of smell is strong and he was enjoying all the smells at the Sonoma-Marin Fair where the contest is held, including funnel cakes and other fried goodies.

Chase, a 14-year-old Chinese Crested-Harke mix, came all the way from Neath, United Kingdom to take third place.

The contestants were judged on first impressions, unusual attributes, personality and audience reaction.

Many of the contestants were adopted. Monkey, a 6-year-old Brussels Griffon, and Icky, an 8-year-old unknown breed, were both rescued from the homes of hoarders.

These dogs — some with acne, others with tongues permanently sticking out — are used to getting called ugly. But for their owners, it was love at first sight.

"He's my sexy boy," Vicky Adler, of Davis, California, said of her 8-year-old Chinese Crested named Zoomer.

## 2 in Thunderbirds jet accident in Ohio in good condition

By LISA CORNWELL, Associated Press

CINCINNATI (AP) — A Thunderbirds Air Force jet went off a runway and overturned Friday during preparations for an Ohio air show, injuring the pilot and causing a performance to be canceled.

Lt. Col. Jason Heard, commander of the Thunderbirds, said a safety board will determine the cause of the "mishap" that occurred upon landing around 12:30 p.m. Friday at Dayton International Airport. The plane sustained some damage as it overturned, but Heard didn't provide any details of the damage.

The pilot, Capt. Erik Gonsalves, suffered some lacerations and injuries to his leg and the other team member, Technical Sgt. Kenneth Cordova, had no visible injuries, according to Heard. Both were in good condition Friday after being treated at a hospital.

Heard said the crew of the F-16D Fighting Falcon was doing a routine advance flight at the Vectren Dayton Air Show site that is done to familiarize staff with it and the team's mission so they can fully explain it to the public. That jet wasn't scheduled to perform in the two-day show.

Dayton is about 55 miles (89 kilometers) north of Cincinnati.

There was rain Friday, but Air Force pilots land in rain "all the time," Heard said.

He said Gonsalves is an experienced pilot.

"They were very brave throughout, and they assisted in their own recovery," Heard said of the two team members.

Extracting the two men from the plane took about two hours, Heard said.

Organizers of the air show say it will go on as planned Saturday and Sunday, but the Thunderbirds have decided not to fly in Saturday's show.

Heard said they had to assess the readiness of the entire team in making the decision not to fly Saturday. "Crowd safety and the safety of our teammates is always our priority," he said.

It wasn't immediately known if they will fly on Sunday.

The 43rd annual show will include a U.S. Navy F/A-18 Super Hornet, an F-35 Lightning II and the Misty Blues All Woman Skydiving Team. It also will commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Doolittle Tokyo Raid in World War II.

This story has been corrected to show that one of the jet's passengers was Technical Sgt. Kenneth Cordova, not Staff Sgt. Kenneth Cordova.

## A 2nd mistrial: Jury deadlocks in Ohio cop's murder retrial

By DAN SEWELL, Associated Press

CINCINNATI (AP) — A second mistrial was declared Friday in the case of a white University of Cincinnati officer who killed an unarmed black motorist during a traffic stop. It's the latest racially charged police shooting case to show the reluctance of U.S. jurors to convict officers.

Hamilton County Judge Leslie Ghiz declared a mistrial after more than 30 hours of jury deliberations over five days. The jurors had said earlier Friday that they were unable to reach a verdict in Officer Ray Tensing's trial, but Ghiz had sent them back to try again on the counts of murder and voluntary manslaughter.

Instead, they sent her another note some three hours later, saying: "We are almost evenly split regarding our votes." The note said they didn't foresee reaching a unanimous verdict.

Tensing looked down, his hand on his face, as the judge announced the mistrial over the death of 43-year-old Sam DuBose, who was shot in the head while driving away from the traffic stop on July 19, 2015. Tensing and his family left quickly without comment.

The first trial against the 27-year-old Tensing also ended in a mistrial after the jury deliberated 25 hours over four days in November without reaching a verdict.

The case is among several across the country in recent years that have raised attention to how police deal with blacks.

A jury last week acquitted a Minnesota officer who fatally shot Philando Castile during a traffic stop. And jurors on Wednesday acquitted a black police officer of first-degree reckless homicide in the death of a black Milwaukee man who threw away the gun he was carrying during a brief foot chase after a traffic stop.

The NAACP of Cincinnati blasted the hung jury result and said they will demand justice.

"The message that is being sent is, if you are black, all the police officer has to do is say they were in fear of their life and they get away with murder because the victim (is) black," the local NAACP said in a statement.

Prosecutors will have to decide whether to try Tensing for a third time. A spokeswoman for the county prosecutor, Joe Deters, said he won't comment until next week.

Ghiz had rejected a prosecution request late in the trial to allow jurors to consider a lesser charge of reckless homicide, saying prosecutors could have done that after the first mistrial.

DuBose's family said in a statement that they want a new trial and they urged that protests remain peaceful.

Dozens of demonstrators were outside the courthouse with rain coming down Friday afternoon, some chanting: "Black lives matter!"

After the first mistrial last year, about 1,000 protesters marched through downtown on Nov. 12, chanting, "Black lives matter, Sam's life matters." The crowd briefly blocked a streetcar line and grew in numbers when they were joined by people leaving a rally opposing the election of Donald Trump as president.

As in his first trial, Tensing testified in his own defense and said his arm was pinned inside DuBose's car when DuBose tried to speed away. Tensing was in tears during both trials as he testified he feared he could be dragged or run over by the car.

"I meant to stop the threat," he told jurors last week. "I didn't shoot to kill him. I didn't shoot to wound him. I shot to stop his actions."

Prosecutors said repeatedly the evidence contradicted Tensing's story. An expert hired by prosecutors said his frame-by-frame analysis of the former officer's body camera video showed the officer was not being dragged by the car.

This jury had nine whites and three blacks. His first trial had 10 whites and two blacks.

The University of Cincinnati fired Tensing in 2015 after his indictment. It restructured its public safety department and made other policing reforms. The university reached a \$5.3 million settlement with DuBose's family, including free undergraduate tuition for DuBose's 13 children.

To convict Tensing of murder, jurors had to find he purposely killed DuBose. The charge carries a possible sentence of 15 years to life in prison.

The voluntary manslaughter charge means killing during sudden passion or a fit of rage. That carries a possible sentence of three to 11 years.

Follow Dan Sewell at <http://twitter.com/dansewell>

This story was corrected to say that the University of Cincinnati fired Tensing in 2015, not last year.

## Depp's 'assassin' comments the latest in celebrity anger

By **MARK KENNEDY, AP Entertainment Writer**

NEW YORK (AP) — Johnny Depp apologized Friday for joking about assassinating Donald Trump during an appearance at a large festival in Britain, the latest example of artists using violent imagery when dealing with the president.

"When was the last time an actor assassinated a president?" Depp asked the crowd at Glastonbury Festival, in reference to the death of Abraham Lincoln by John Wilkes Booth in 1865.

The 54-year-old "Pirates of the Caribbean" star then added: "I want to clarify, I am not an actor. I lie for a living. However, it has been awhile and maybe it is time."

Depp said in a statement Friday that he did not intend any malice and was trying to be amusing.

"I apologize for the bad joke I attempted last night in poor taste about President Trump," the statement said. "It did not come out as intended, and I intended no malice. I was only trying to amuse, not to harm anyone."

White House spokesman Sean Spicer said Friday "the lack of outrage" over Depp's comments was "a little troubling."

"The president has made it clear that we should denounce violence in all of its forms. And if we are going to hold to that standard than we should agree that that standard be universally called out," he said.

That message was undercut when an adviser to Trump's campaign who called for Hillary Clinton to be shot visited the White House just hours before Spicer spoke to the media.

Al Baldasaro, who advised Trump on veterans issues, said last summer that he believed Clinton "committed treason" for putting American lives at risk while secretary of state. He then said "anyone that commits treason should be shot."

On the Depp comments, the Secret Service in a statement that it was "aware of the comments in question. For security reasons, we cannot discuss specifically nor in general terms the means and methods of how we perform our protective responsibilities."

Depp was at the festival Thursday to introduce a screening of his 2004 film, "The Libertine."

He seemed to know his comments were going to get him into trouble, prefacing his remarks with, "By

the way, this is going to be in the press. It will be horrible." Depp's remarks came eight days after a gunman opened fire on Republican lawmakers as they practiced for a charity baseball game.

Depp's remarks come weeks after The Public Theater in New York was criticized for its production of "Julius Caesar" that portrayed a Trump-like dictator in a business suit with a long tie who gets knifed to death onstage. The theater said it never advocates violence as a solution to political problems.

The show followed condemnation for comedian Kathy Griffin, who lost her job co-hosting CNN's New Year's Eve special and had all her upcoming comedy shows canceled after posing for a photograph in which she gripped a likeness of the president's severed, bloody head. Pop star Madonna also was criticized for saying at a rally that she had thought "an awful lot about blowing up the White House."

Musicians have also gone after the president, with a Snoop Dogg's video of him shooting a Trump-lookalike clown and Moby putting out a video in which Trump resembles a Nazi-like Iron Man who takes over the world with a missile-firing machine shaped like a swastika and dollar symbol.

Trump's election has not quieted many in the arts community who assailed the candidate, with Robert De Niro saying he'd "like to punch" Trump "in the face," Carly Simon repurposing her song "You're So Vain" into an anti-Trump anthem and singer-rapper Will.i.am's damning video "GRAB'm by the ...."

Other presidents have found themselves the target of celebrity ire, including George W. Bush, who was attacked by the Dixie Chicks and by Kanye West, who famously said Bush "doesn't care about black people."

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This story has been corrected to show that Depp said "clarify" instead of "qualify" when mentioning his status as an actor.

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AP writer Jonathan Lemire contributed to this report.

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Mark Kennedy is at <http://twitter.com/KennedyTwits>

## Microphone cut after Mormon girl reveals she's gay at church

By **BRADY McCOMBS**, Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — A video of a young Mormon girl revealing to her congregation that she is lesbian and still loved by God — before her microphone is turned off by local church leaders — is sparking a new round of discussions about how the religion handles LGBT issues.

Savannah, 13, spoke on May 7 in Eagle Mountain, Utah, about her belief that she is the child of heavenly parents who didn't make any mistakes when she was created. Her comments came during a once-a-month portion of Mormon Sunday services where members are encouraged to share feelings and beliefs.

"They did not mess up when they gave me freckles or when they made me to be gay," she said, wearing a white shirt and red tie. "God loves me just this way."

Her mother, Heather Kester, said Friday that her daughter was passionate about coming out in church to be a voice and example for other LGBT children who struggle for acceptance within The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. She asked that Savannah's full name be withheld to protect her privacy.

The Mormon religion is one of many conservative faith groups upholding theological opposition to same-sex relationships amid widespread social acceptance and the U.S. Supreme Court's decision legalizing gay marriage. At the same time, the Mormon church is trying to foster an empathetic stance toward LGBT people.

The video, which Kester says was taken by a friend of Savannah who came to support her, has generated buzz after it was circulated online this month and featured in a Mormon LGBT podcast.

While some consider Savannah a hero, other Mormons are upset that it was videotaped and is being circulated by church critics to try and paint the church in an unflattering light.

Judd Law, the lay bishop who leads the congregation south of Salt Lake City, said in a statement distributed by church headquarters that Savannah is a "brave young girl" and that the congregation is making sure she and her family feel loved.

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But he called problematic the unauthorized recording and the “disruptive demonstration” by a group of non-Mormon adults who were there.

Law said they exploited the events to politicize worship services and violate church decorum. “We do not politic in our chapels, and exploiting this recording for political purposes is inconsistent with the nature of our worship services,” he said.

Law didn’t address or explain the decision by two of his counselors to cut the microphone. Law wasn’t at the service that day.

Savannah read from written notes from the pulpit. Kester said she is not Mormon, but her husband is and Savannah has been raised in the religion.

“I do not choose to be this way and this is not a fad,” Savannah said on May 7. “I cannot make someone else gay ... I believe that God wants us to treat each other with kindness, even if people are different, especially if they are different.”

Her microphone was muted after about two minutes — shortly after she said she’s not a “horrible sinner” and that she someday hopes to have a partner, get married and have a family. She turned around to listen to something a man in a suit told her and then was walked down from the pulpit.

Kester said her daughter came and cried in her lap. She told her she was beautiful and that God loved her, Kester said.

“I was devastated for her,” said Kester, adding. “I was angry at how that was handled.”

After the Utah-based Mormon church received backlash in 2008 for helping lead the fight for California’s Proposition 8 constitutional ban on gay marriage, religious leaders spent several years carefully developing a more empathetic LGBT tone. That was interrupted in 2015 when the church adopted new rules banning children living with gay parents from being baptized until age 18.

In October, church leaders updated a website created in 2012 to let members know that that attraction to people of the same sex is not a sin or a measure of their faithfulness and may never go away. But the church reminded members that having gay sex violates fundamental doctrinal beliefs that will not change.

Scott Gordon, president of FairMormon, a volunteer organization that supports the church, wrote a blog defending the church against a rash of criticism over the incident.

Gordon said it would have been OK for Savannah to come out as gay during testimony, but that she crossed the line when she mischaracterized church teachings by saying God would want her to have a partner and get married.

“While you can believe almost anything you want to believe, you can’t preach it from the pulpit,” Gordon said.

Britt Jones, a bisexual Mormon who runs a podcast called “I like to look for Rainbows” that featured Savannah’s story, said the leaders should have allowed Savannah to finish.

“Queer issues don’t get talked about in the church enough,” said Jones, who is married to a woman and has children. “It was really brave and really admirable, particularly for somebody that young, that she not only wanted to talk about it herself but be a voice for others suffering in silence.”

## Trump signs law to make VA more accountable for vets’ care

By **DARLENE SUPERVILLE** and **JONATHAN LEMIRE**, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump signed a bill into law Friday that will make it easier for the Department of Veterans Affairs to fire employees, part of a push to overhaul an agency that is struggling to serve millions of military vets.

“Our veterans have fulfilled their duty to our nation and now we must fulfill our duty to them,” Trump said during a White House ceremony. “To every veteran who is here with us today, I just want to say two very simple words: Thank you.”

Trump repeatedly promised during the election campaign to dismiss VA workers “who let our veterans down,” and he cast Friday’s bill signing as fulfillment of that promise.

“What happened was a national disgrace and yet some of the employees involved in these scandals

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remained on the payrolls," Trump said. "Outdated laws kept the government from holding those who failed our veterans accountable. Today we are finally changing those laws."

The measure was prompted by a 2014 scandal at the Phoenix VA medical center, where some veterans died as they waited months for care. The VA is the second-largest department in the U.S. government, with more than 350,000 employees, and it is charged with providing health care and other services to military veterans.

Federal employee unions opposed the measure. VA Secretary David Shulkin, an Obama administration holdover, stood alongside Trump as the president jokingly suggested he'd have to invoke his reality TV catchphrase "You're fired" if the reforms were not implemented.

The legislation, which many veterans' groups supported, cleared the House last week by an overwhelmingly bipartisan vote of 368-55, replacing an earlier version that Democrats had criticized as overly unfair to employees. The Senate passed the bill by voice vote a week earlier.

Paul Rieckhoff, founder of the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, applauded the move, saying, "In a nasty, partisan environment like we've never seen, veterans' issues can be a unique area for Washington to unite in actually getting things done for ordinary Americans."

The bill was a rare Trump initiative that received Democratic support. Montana Sen. Jon Tester said the bill "will protect whistleblowers from the threat of retaliation."

The new law will lower the burden of proof to fire employees, allowing for dismissal even if most evidence is in a worker's favor.

The American Federation of Government Employees, the largest federal employee union, opposed the bill. But the Senate-passed measure was seen as more in balance with workers' rights than a version passed by the House in March, mostly along party lines. The Senate bill calls for a longer appeal process than the House version — 180 days versus 45 days. VA executives would be held to a tougher standard than rank-and-file employees.

The bill also turns another of Trump's campaign pledges into law by creating a permanent VA accountability office, which Trump established by executive order in April.

House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy, a California Republican, called the bill signing "a significant step to reform the VA with a renewed purpose and ability to serve our veterans."

"The ultimate goal is nothing less than a transformation of the culture within the VA so that our veterans receive the best care possible," McCarthy said.

The VA has been plagued for years by problems, including the 2014 scandal, where employees created secret lists to cover up delays in appointments. Critics say few employees are fired for malfeasance.

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Associated Press writer Hope Yen contributed to this report.

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Follow Darlene Superville on Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/dsupervilleap> and Lemire at <http://twitter.com/JonLemire>

## 40 people killed in bomb, gun attacks in 3 Pakistani cities

By RIAZ KHAN and ABDUL SATTAR, Associated Press

PESHAWAR, Pakistan (AP) — At least 40 people were killed and nearly 100 wounded Friday in four separate bomb and gun attacks in three major Pakistani cities, officials said.

A suicide bomber was involved in the first car bombing near the office of the provincial police chief in the southwestern city of Quetta that killed at least 12 people and wounded 20. There were conflicting claims of responsibility for this attack from different extremist groups.

Hours later twin bombings, minutes apart, hit a crowded market in a Shiite-dominated city in Parachinar, the main city in the Kurram tribal region and killed 24 people, mostly minority Shiite Muslims, according to government administrator Zahid Hussain.

Friday evening, gunmen in the port city of Karachi attacked police officers at a roadside restaurant and

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killed four of them before fleeing, senior police officer Asif Ahmed said.

Security forces raided a militant hideout in the northwestern city of Peshawar before dawn Saturday, triggering a shootout in which three Pakistani Taliban were killed, senior police official Sajjad Khan said. He said two police officers were wounded in the gunbattle.

Khan said the identity of the slain militants was not immediately known.

The bomb and gun attacks come a few days before the Muslim holiday of Eid-al-Fitr, which ends the holy month of Ramadan. TV footage showed panicked people rushing to safety following the Parachinar market bombings.

Mohammad Amir, an official at a government-run hospital in Parachinar, said they had received 24 dead bodies and more than 20 of the wounded were listed in critical condition.

Hussain said a severed head of a man was found near the scene of blasts, indicating the second attack in Parachinar might have been carried out by a suicide bomber but officers are still investigating to determine the exact nature of bombings.

Parachinar is located about 300 kilometers (180 miles) southwest of Peshawar.

According to Pakistan's military, it was using two helicopters to transport wounded people to other cities. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif condemned the attacks, saying terrorists were attacking soft targets.

Friday's car bombing in Quetta, the capital of Baluchistan province, was powerful enough that it was heard across the city, shattering windows on nearby buildings, said police spokesman Shahzada Farhat.

Wasim Beg, a spokesman at a government hospital, said the death toll from the bombing had risen to 12 throughout the morning and some of the wounded remained in critical condition.

TV footage showed several badly damaged cars and a road littered with broken glass.

Hours after the attack, Jamaat-ul-Ahrar, a breakaway faction of the Pakistani Taliban, claimed responsibility. Asad Mansoor, the militants' spokesman, vowed more such attacks as part of the extremist group's campaign aimed at imposing Islamic laws in the country.

Later Friday, the Islamic State group said in a competing claim that it was behind the attack, adding that one of its followers targeted the police post in Quetta, detonating his suicide belt there. It also released a photograph of the alleged attacker, identified as Abu Othman al-Khorasani.

The competing claims could not be reconciled.

Anwarul Haq Kakar, a spokesman for the provincial government, blamed neighboring India for the blast but offered no evidence to back up the allegation.

Pakistan and India routinely trade charges of interference and inciting attacks on one another's soil.

On Thursday, Pakistan said that an Indian naval officer, Kulbhushan Jadhav, who was sentenced to death by a Pakistani military court on charges of espionage and sabotage, had petitioned for mercy.

Jadhav, who Pakistan said had crossed into Baluchistan from neighboring Iran, was arrested in March 2016 and sentenced to death in April.

In New Delhi, the Ministry of External Affairs insisted Jadhav was sentenced on "concocted charges" and expressed doubts about the existence of the petition for mercy. It also reiterated that the proceedings against Jadhav have been shrouded "in opacity."

Baluchistan has long been the scene of a low-level insurgency by Baluch nationalists and separatists, who want a bigger share of the regional resources or outright independence, but also attacks blamed on the Pakistani Taliban and others. Those militant groups include Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, which is considered a close ally of IS, as well as Jamaat-ul-Ahrar, which has taken credit for several previous attacks in Baluchistan and elsewhere and has bases in Pakistan's tribal regions.

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Associated Press writer Riaz Khan reported this story in Peshawar and AP writer Abdul Sattar reported from Quetta. AP writers Katy Daigle in New Delhi, Maamoun Youssef in Cairo and Munir Ahmed in Islamabad contributed to this report.

## London council evacuates residents amid fire safety concerns

By DANICA KIRKA, Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — One London community is evacuating some 800 households from five publicly owned apartment towers because of safety concerns following the devastating fire that killed 79 people in a west London high-rise last week.

The move comes as residents of thousands of tower blocks around Britain expressed concern about safety after commonly used building materials were blamed for rapidly spreading the blaze at Grenfell Tower.

Camden Council in north London, which announced the evacuation Friday night, was the first local government to take the dramatic step of emptying its buildings so safety upgrades could be made.

Council leader Georgia Gould said the borough made the decision after the London Fire Brigade and council experts said they couldn't guarantee the safety of residents after inspecting the five towers. The inspectors were following up on previously unknown safety complaints from residents, she said.

"I've made the really, really difficult decision to move the people living there into temporary accommodation while we do the urgent works to guarantee safety," Gould told reporters outside the public housing complex. "I know it's difficult, but Grenfell changes everything."

Public safety concerns have been prompted by exterior cladding known as aluminum composite panels, which are believed to have rapidly spread the fire at Grenfell Tower on June 14, trapping residents in their homes before firefighters could save them.

Local councils around Britain are testing similar panels on hundreds of their buildings. Fourteen apartment blocks have so far tested positive for combustible materials.

But some residents of the Camden buildings, collectively known as Chalcots Estate, expressed frustration with the lack of information they received about the evacuations.

Edward Strange, who lives on the 11th floor of the Taplow Tower, was on his way to the airport when he heard about the evacuation on the radio and returned to find council workers in neon security vests directing residents to a nearby community center, where they were offered air beds on a badminton court.

"I just think it's a complete overreaction," he told Sky News. "Or at least we should be given the choice. If we wanted to leave, we should have the choice to leave. But being told that we have to leave is just ridiculous. It's our home."

British Prime Minister Theresa May offered a message of sympathy to the affected residents, taking to Twitter to pledge she would work with relevant authorities to offer support.

"My thoughts are with residents being evacuated in Camden while their homes are made safe tonight," she said.

The council encouraged residents to stay with friends and family, but promised to provide temporary accommodation, if that weren't possible. Repairs on the building are expected to be completed within three to four weeks.

The council gave notice it had concerns about the cladding on its buildings Thursday, when tests showed the material was not the fire-resistant variety it had ordered.

Earlier Friday, police said they were considering filing manslaughter charges in the Grenfell disaster.

In its most detailed briefing yet on the criminal investigation, the Metropolitan Police on Friday confirmed residents' suspicions that the inferno at Grenfell was touched off by a refrigerator fire.

The department also said cladding attached to the 24-story public housing project during a recent renovation failed safety tests conducted by investigators, and that police have seized documents from a number of organizations.

"We are looking at every criminal offense from manslaughter onwards," Detective Superintendent Fiona McCormack told reporters. "We are looking at all health and safety and fire safety offenses, and we are reviewing every company at the moment involved in the building and refurbishment of Grenfell Tower."

The government has ordered an immediate examination of the refrigerator model that started the blaze. McCormack said the Hotpoint model FF175BP refrigerator-freezer had not been subject to any product recalls before the fire.

Hotpoint said Friday that "words cannot express our sorrow at this terrible tragedy" and added it was

working with authorities to examine the appliance.

The overnight fire rapidly engulfed Grenfell Tower, with flames shooting up the outside of the building, raising concerns that the cladding material attached to the concrete block didn't comply with fire-safety rules.

Police are looking at all parts of the cladding system and its installation, McCormack said.

"Preliminary tests show the insulation samples collected from Grenfell Tower combusted soon after the test started," she said. "The initial tests on equivalent aluminum composite tiles failed the safety tests."

Authorities now acknowledge the risks posed by exterior cladding to thousands of people around the country who live in blocks like Grenfell Tower.

The government has called on all building owners, public and private, to submit samples of cladding material used on their buildings for testing. Samples from 14 buildings in London, Manchester and Plymouth have already been found to be combustible.

Fears about cladding are not limited to apartment buildings. At least one hotel chain is calling in experts to make certain its properties meet safety regulations. Premier Inn said Friday it had "concerns" about the material used on some of its buildings, though it is different from the type used at Grenfell Tower.

McCormack also repeated calls for anyone with information about the fire and all those in the tower at the time to come forward as police continue to comb through the devastated building to try to identify all the victims.

Police says 79 people are either dead or missing and presumed dead in the blaze, although that number may change.

To make sure everyone comes forward, London Mayor Sadiq Khan pledged to seek an amnesty for people who may have been living in the public housing block illegally. Prime Minister Theresa May also said the government won't penalize any fire survivors in the country illegally.

"We want to identify all those who died as result of the fire at Grenfell Tower, and that is where I need the public's help," McCormack said. "I do not want there to be any hidden victims of this tragedy."

Firefighters and emergency workers who battled the inferno have been leaving messages and tributes to the victims at a makeshift memorial near the charred apartment block.

Heartbreaking messages written on red London Fire Brigade T-shirts offer poignant tributes alongside flowers, toys and candles at the shrine. One tribute, from a firefighter in the Kensington and Chelsea borough read: "20th floor, we tried... we're sorry."

Another firefighter wrote "Our hearts go out to everyone touched by this tragedy. We did our best I promise."

One shirt bearing the London Ambulance Service logo said: "We refuse to forget you."

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Associated Press writer Alastair J. Grant contributed to this report.

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This story has been corrected to show the name of complex is Chalcots.

## Senators ask military to clarify US role in Yemen torture

By **DESMOND BUTLER** and **MAGGIE MICHAEL**, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Pressure mounted on the U.S. Defense Department Friday after multiple U.S. senators called for investigations into reports that U.S. military interrogators worked with forces from the United Arab Emirates who are accused of torturing detainees in Yemen.

John McCain, Republican chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, and the ranking Democrat, Jack Reed, called the reports "deeply disturbing."

The reports were revealed in an investigation by The Associated Press published Thursday.

That same day, McCain and Reed wrote a letter to Defense Secretary Jim Mattis asking him to conduct an immediate review of the reported abuse and what U.S. forces knew.

"Even the suggestion that the United States tolerates torture by our foreign partners compromises our

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national security mission by undermining the moral principle that distinguishes us from our enemies— our belief that all people possess basic human rights,” the senators wrote Mattis . “We are confident that you find these allegations as extremely troubling as we do.”

Democratic Sen. Patrick Leahy, Vice Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, also called for an investigation and noted that support for the UAE forces could violate a law he wrote that forbids funding to known human rights violators.

“Reports of acts of torture by agents of a government that is supported by the United States, and the possibility that U.S. military personnel may have been aware of it, should ring alarm bells at the Department of Defense,” Leahy said in a statement to the AP.

The AP’s report detailed a network of secret prisons across southern Yemen where hundreds are detained in the hunt for al-Qaida militants and held without charges. American defense officials confirmed to the AP that U.S. forces have interrogated some detainees in Yemen but denied any participation in, or knowledge of, human rights abuses.

Defense officials told the AP that the department had looked into reports of torture and concluded that its personnel were not involved or aware of any abuse. The American officials confirmed that the U.S. provides questions to the Emiratis and receives transcripts of their interrogations. The officials said the U.S. also provides information to the UAE on suspected al-Qaida militants that the U.S. believes should be picked up or questioned.

Yemeni Brig. Gen. Farag Salem al-Bahsani, commander of the Mukalla-based 2nd Military District, told the AP that many of those men were later arrested.

“I’m troubled by the Pentagon’s legalistic responses to these reports that U.S. officials worked in facilities where torture was widespread,” Democratic Sen. Ron Wyden said in a statement. “U.S. allies have an obligation not to torture and the bar for the U.S. is higher than ‘torture is OK if we don’t see it.’”

The American Civil Liberties Union also said Friday that it had filed a Freedom of Information Act request for U.S. records related to the interrogations.

The 18 lock-ups are run by the UAE and by Yemeni forces it created, according to accounts from former detainees, families of prisoners, civil rights lawyers and Yemeni military officials. At the Riyan airport in the southern Yemeni city of Mukalla, former inmates described shipping containers smeared with feces and crammed with blindfolded detainees. They said they were beaten, roasted alive on a spit and sexually assaulted, among other abuse. One witness, who is a member of a Yemeni security force, said American forces were at times only yards (meters) away.

The UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement Friday that the allegations are “completely untrue” and a “political game” by Yemeni militias to discredit a Saudi-led coalition that includes the UAE. It says it does not run or oversee any prisons in Yemen, and that any such facilities are under “the jurisdiction of the Yemeni legitimate authorities.”

Most of the clandestine sites are run by either the Hadramawt Elite or Security Belt, Yemeni forces that were created, trained and financed by the UAE. Officially, they are under the authority of Yemen’s internationally recognized government, but multiple Yemeni government officials told the AP they have no control over them and they answer to the Emiratis.

At least three of the prisons, however, are directly run by the Emirates, along with a fourth prison housing Yemenis at an Emirati base in Eritrea, according to four senior Yemeni government and military officials, former detainees and families of prisoners.

At Riyan Airport prison in the southern Yemeni city of Mukalla, six former detainees described hundreds of prisoners held in shipping containers and gave extensive accounts of abuses, saying the officers in charge and those conducting interrogations were Emiratis. Families held frequent protests outside Riyan seeking news about loved ones imprisoned there. Several relatives of prisoners told the AP that they spoke repeatedly with the Emirati officer in charge of the site, who identified himself only by a pseudonym, Abu Ahmed, trying to secure their relatives’ release.

The former detainees and the relatives of prisoners spoke on condition of anonymity fearing retaliation

against themselves or their loved ones.

"We request that you direct an immediate review of the facts and circumstances related to these alleged abuses, including U.S. support to the Emirati and Yemeni partner forces that were purportedly involved," the lawmakers wrote.

McCain, a Navy pilot during the Vietnam War, was captured after his plane was shot down in 1967. He was imprisoned for more than five and half years and tortured repeatedly before he was released in 1973. In the Senate, McCain has criticized harsh treatment of terror suspects by the CIA at "black site" prisons and was a key sponsor of the 2005 Detainee Treatment Act prohibiting inhumane treatment of prisoners.

Michael reported from Cairo. Stephen Braun contributed to this report.

Follow Maggie Michael on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/mokhbersahafi> and Desmond Butler at <https://twitter.com/desmondbutler>

## **Pence visits Focus on Family amid change for religious right**

**By NICHOLAS RICCARDI and KRISTEN WYATT, Associated Press**

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. (AP) — Vice President Mike Pence's visit Friday to Colorado to celebrate the anniversary of Focus on the Family came at a time of change for the religious right during the age of President Donald Trump.

Focus on the Family was once well-known for its involvement in politics. But under new leadership, it has dialed that back in an effort by younger evangelicals to withdraw from partisan culture wars.

At the same time, many older evangelicals have stayed the course, helping Trump become president and the religious right gain political power.

Trump's win breathed new life into the older-school political approach that Focus on the Family once embodied.

Pence urged the group to rekindle its interest in politics, especially in light of a health care proposal that could dramatically slash support for abortion provider Planned Parenthood.

"The time is now," Pence said, rousing about 1,650 supporters to their feet when he declared the health law passed under President Barack Obama was "dead."

"This is when we are going to defund Planned Parenthood once and for all," Pence said, whipping the standing crowd to whistles and cheers.

Focus was founded in 1977 by James Dobson, a child psychologist who started a radio show advising Christians about being good parents. That effort evolved into Focus on the Family, which at its peak had more than 1,000 employees and served as a platform for Dobson to weigh in on legislation, sit on White House panels and campaign against gay rights.

Dobson left in 2010, and the organization is now about half the size. It's led by 55-year-old Jim Daly, who has scaled back involvement in politics and sees himself as part of a younger generation of religious leadership.

Focus remains true to its Dobson-era mission of fighting against laws that ban conversion therapy to "cure" gay people.

But perhaps the greatest contrast between the old and new Focus came last year, when Dobson endorsed Trump while Daly and Focus stayed neutral.

"Those heavyweights in the Christian community" grew up in an era of widespread school prayer and centrality of Christianity in American life, Daly said. "They literally were trying to save the nation from going in the wrong direction."

Daly said the younger generation knows those days are past and is wary of using electoral politics to rekindle them.

"Jesus does not go after Caesar much — he dealt with people at their point of need," Daly said, touting the ministry's radio show, counseling and efforts promoting foster care and adoption.

His arguments echo those of other religious leaders such as Russell Moore of the Southern Baptist Con-

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vention, who pushed his denomination to formally condemn the so-called "alt right" movement, and Rick Warren of Saddleback Church in California.

The 81-year-old Dobson was vacationing in California and unavailable for an interview.

After moving to Colorado in 1991, the Dobson-era Focus pushed a ballot measure to block any anti-discrimination laws aimed at protecting gays in cities and counties in the state.

The measure passed but was struck down by the Supreme Court. In the process, it inspired several gay Coloradans to become Democratic activists. Ted Trimpa is now one of Colorado's most prominent political strategists and a close friend of Daly.

Trimpa recalled a private meeting with Daly and several younger religious conservatives before the Supreme Court legalized gay marriage. He was struck by how open the new generation is.

"They don't approach it as 'you're doing something wrong, you're sinning,'" Trimpa said. "There isn't a core belief that either one of us is counter to humanity — and that's where we always believed Dobson to be."

Rev. Barry Lynn, executive director of Americans United for the Separation of Church and State, contended that Focus' softer-edged stance is just a pose.

"Look at the data they put out," Lynn said, referring to Focus' arguments against bans on conversion therapy and suggestions that transgender children are being misled. "This is really hard-core stuff and it's not easily distinguished from the way Jim Dobson talked when he ran the place."

Jeff Hunt, director of the Centennial Institute, a think tank at Colorado Christian University, said the less-political approach of those like Daly has opened up a void in religious politics that others filled by enthusiastically backing Trump.

"There's still a real hunger for continual, strong leadership that Dobson provided," Hunt said.

Trump won the support of 80 percent of evangelicals, according to exit polls — the highest percentage for a presidential candidate on record.

Since Trump entered the White House, polls have shown religious voters to be his most steadfast supporters. He has rewarded them, appointing Ben Carson, a hero to many religious conservatives and a former guest on Focus radio shows, to run the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Trump's Education Secretary, Betsy DeVos, has been a strong supporter of religious schools. And Pence, who in a speech earlier this month called Dobson his "mentor," is a prominent evangelical politician.

Much of the energy that conservative religious voters put behind Trump stemmed from the anxiety they felt during the Obama years, when gay marriage became legal and religious employers were required to provide health insurance that covered birth control.

"Our strength has a lot to do with the way the faith community felt under attack the past eight years," Hunt said.

Even though Focus wasn't actively involved in Trump's win, Daly is happy with the administration. He also admires Pence.

But Daly doesn't have too much faith that religious conservatives will stay in political power. Democrats, he said, will eventually win again.

"This is fleeting," Daly said.

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This story has been corrected to fix Jeff Hunt's title. He is director of a think tank at Colorado Christian University, not the school's president.

## Ferguson attorney: Brown family settlement \$1.5 million

By JIM SALTER, Associated Press

ST. LOUIS (AP) — The \$1.5 million awarded this week to the parents of Michael Brown is the latest of several large settlements involving killings of black people by police, but it's far from the largest.

A federal judge in St. Louis on Tuesday approved the settlement in a wrongful death lawsuit filed by Michael Brown Sr. and Lezley McSpadden. Their 18-year-old son was unarmed on Aug. 9, 2014, when he was fatally shot by white officer Darren Wilson during a street confrontation in Ferguson, Missouri.

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The shooting launched months of protests and led to a U.S. Department of Justice investigation that found racial bias in Ferguson's police and court system. But a St. Louis County grand jury and the Justice Department declined to prosecute Wilson, who resigned in November 2014.

Brown's parents sued the city, former Police Chief Tom Jackson and Wilson in 2015, citing a police culture hostile to black residents and claiming Wilson used excessive force. Ferguson, Jackson and Wilson denied the allegations.

The case is among many in which settlements have been reached out of court, including many in which officers, like Wilson, were cleared of criminal wrongdoing.

U.S. District Judge E. Richard Webber did not release the amount of the settlement, citing unspecified safety concerns. But Ferguson City Attorney Apollo Carey said in an email Friday in response to an open records request from The Associated Press that the city's insurance company paid out \$1.5 million.

While settlements are expensive, cities facing lawsuits in wrongful death cases are aware of the danger of going to trial, said James Cohen, a professor at Fordham University School of Law. He said the settlement amount could be dwarfed by an award granted by a jury sympathetic to the family.

"The city is afraid that someone on that jury is a member of Black Lives Matter, even if the juror is Caucasian," Cohen said.

Settlements in some other recent high-profile cases have been much higher than the amount awarded to Brown's parents.

In 2015, the city of North Charleston, South Carolina, paid \$6.5 million to the family of Walter Scott, an unarmed black man who was killed by a white police officer while running from a traffic stop. The officer, Michael T. Slager, pleaded guilty in May to a civil rights violation.

A month earlier, Baltimore paid \$6.4 million to the family of Freddie Gray, who suffered a fatal spinal injury in police custody. No officers were convicted.

New York City reached a \$5.9 million settlement in July 2015 with the family of Eric Garner, an unarmed black man who died after being put in a chokehold by a white police officer. The officer was cleared by a grand jury.

Cleveland agreed to pay \$6 million last year to the family of Tamir Rice. The 12-year-old had an airsoft gun that shoots nonlethal plastic pellets when a white officer shot him in 2014. A grand jury did not charge the officer.

Also last year, Pleasantville, New York, paid \$6 million to the family of Danroy Henry Jr., a 20-year-old black college student shot to death by a white officer in 2010. No charges were filed against the officer.

Some award amounts this year have been lower. Madison, Wisconsin, agreed to pay \$3.35 million to relatives of 19-year-old Tony Robinson Jr., who was unarmed when he was fatally shot. Milwaukee reached a \$2.3 million tentative settlement with the family of Dontre Hamilton, a man with schizophrenia who was shot by police. Arlington, Texas, reached an \$850,000 settlement with the family of 19-year-old Christian Taylor, who was shot by an officer while allegedly vandalizing cars at a dealership. Police were not charged in any of those cases.

Peter Joy, a professor at Washington University School of Law in St. Louis, said the evidence of a case is a big factor in determining the settlement amount. While some of the other cases had video evidence, there was no video of the confrontation between Brown and Wilson in Ferguson — a potential factor in the lower payment.

Cohen said the allegations against Brown may have reduced leverage for his attorneys. Brown was accused of stealing from a store on the same day he died, and he was accused of reaching into Wilson's police vehicle and attacking him, leading up to the shooting.

"You can see the story the defense attorney would tell at trial," Cohen said.

## APNewsBreak: Military heads want transgender enlistment hold

By LOLITA C. BALDOR, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Military chiefs will seek a six-month delay before letting transgender people enlist in their services, officials said Friday.

After meetings this week, the service leaders hammered out an agreement that rejected Army and Air Force requests for a two-year wait and reflected broader concerns that a longer delay would trigger criticism on Capitol Hill, officials familiar with the talks told The Associated Press.

The new request for a delay will go to Defense Secretary Jim Mattis for a final decision, said the officials, who weren't authorized to discuss the internal deliberations publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Transgender servicemembers have been able to serve openly in the military since last year, when former Defense Secretary Ash Carter ended the ban, declaring it the right thing to do. Since Oct. 1, transgender troops have been able to receive medical care and start formally changing their gender identifications in the Pentagon's personnel system.

But Carter also gave the services until July 1 to develop policies to allow people already identifying as transgender to newly join the military, if they meet physical, medical and other standards, and have been stable in their identified genders for 18 months. The military chiefs had said they needed time to study the issue and its effects on the readiness of the force before taking that step.

Officials said Friday that the chiefs believe the extra half-year would give the four military services time to gauge if currently serving transgender troops are facing problems and what necessary changes the military bases might have to make.

The chiefs of the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps discussed the matter with Deputy Defense Secretary Robert Work on Thursday, officials said.

Dana White, the Pentagon's chief spokeswoman, said there have been ongoing discussions with the service chiefs and a recommendation is expected, but she declined to disclose any details.

"It's been a very deliberative process," she said. "The deputy secretary of defense has not submitted a recommendation to the secretary yet and so no decision has been made."

Stephen Peters, spokesman for Human Rights Campaign, said the group is disappointed with the delay request.

"Each day that passes without implementing the final piece of this important policy harms our military readiness and restricts the Armed Forces' ability to recruit the best and the brightest," said Peters, a Marine veteran. "There are thousands of transgender service members openly and proudly serving our nation today, and as they've proven time and time again, what matters is the ability to get the job done — not their gender identity."

Already, there are as many as 250 servicemembers in the process of transitioning to their preferred genders or who have been approved to formally change gender within the Pentagon's personnel system, according to several defense officials.

According to several officials familiar with the matter, three of the four services wanted more time. In recent weeks, Navy officials suggested they would be ready to begin enlistment in July but asked for a one-year delay, largely to accommodate a request from the Marine Corps for more time, officials said. The Navy secretary also oversees the Marine Corps.

The Army and Air Force wanted a two-year delay to further study the issue, said the officials, who were not authorized to talk about the internal discussion publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Officials said there was a broad recognition that allowing transgender individuals to enlist affects each service differently. They described the biggest challenge as the infantry. They said the discussions aimed at a solution that would give recruits the best chance of succeeding, while ensuring the services maintain the best standards for entry into the military.

Service chiefs will also require that transgender recruits be stable in their preferred genders for at least two years, an increase from Carter's earlier plan to allow 18 months, the officials said. The chiefs also want to review the policy in a year to see how things are working, the officials said.

Key concerns are whether currently enlisted troops have had medical or other issues that cause delays or problems with their ability to deploy or meet physical or other standards for their jobs. Military leaders also want to review how transgender troops are treated, if they're discriminated against or have had disciplinary problems, the officials said.

Gen. Joseph Dunford, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told a Senate committee last week there have been some issues identified with recruiting transgender individuals that "some of the service chiefs believe need to be resolved before we move forward." He said Mattis is reviewing the matter.

The military services have various ways of counting the number of transgender troops currently serving. The Pentagon has refused to release any data. But officials said there are 42 servicemembers across the Army, including the National Guard and Reserve, who have been approved to change their gender identities in the personnel system. At least 40 more are in the process of transitioning, they said.

Officials said there are about 160 sailors in the Navy who are somewhere in the process of gender transition. That could include counseling, hormone treatment or gender reassignment surgery. And about "a handful" of Marines have come forward to seek medical care involving gender transition, and there are possibly others going through the process with their commanders, officials said.

The Air Force refused to release any numbers, and other officials did not know those details.

A RAND study found that there are between 2,500 and 7,000 transgender service members in the active duty military, and another 1,500 to 4,000 in the reserves.

## Doctors: Officer stabbed in neck at airport recovering well

By MIKE HOUSEHOLDER and JEFF KAROUB, Associated Press

FLINT, Mich. (AP) — The Flint, Michigan, airport officer stabbed in the neck during what authorities are investigating as a terrorist act is recovering well from a 12-inch "slash" that caused significant bleeding but spared major arteries and a nerve by "millimeters," one of his doctors said Friday.

Hurley Medical Center doctors said during a news conference that Bishop International Airport police Lt. Jeff Neville could be released from the hospital within a couple days. Dr. Donald Scholten said he is making good progress after being stabbed from "by his Adam's apple" up "to the angle of his jaw."

"This was a matter of millimeters," Scholten said. "The slash was probably very, very close to severing his major arteries and nerve — perhaps even his windpipe and digestive systems ... This was not a shaving nick, if you will. This was significant force."

Neville was stabbed Wednesday at the airport in Flint, about 50 miles (80.46 kilometers) northwest of Detroit. Amor Ftouhi, 49, a Canadian from Tunisia, is charged in the attack. Detroit FBI head David Gelios said Ftouhi unsuccessfully tried to buy a gun once he arrived in the U.S. but instead managed to buy a large knife.

Authorities say Ftouhi stabbed Neville with a large knife after yelling "Allahu akbar," the Arabic phrase for "God is great." According to the FBI, Ftouhi said something similar to "you have killed people in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan, and we are all going to die."

Ftouhi was immediately taken into custody and was charged in a criminal complaint with committing violence at an airport. Acting U.S. Attorney Dan Lemisch said more charges are coming in the days ahead. Ftouhi is in custody and has a bond hearing scheduled for Wednesday.

Neville "fought him to the end," managing to stop the stabbing and bring Ftouhi to the ground as other officers arrived to help, according to Chris Miller, the airport police chief. Scholten also credits first responders, saying their efforts to control Neville's bleeding were "absolutely life-saving."

Investigators are working to learn more about Ftouhi, whom they describe as a lone-wolf attacker who made his way to the seemingly random destination of Flint, a struggling city once known for its sprawling General Motors factories but now better known for lead-tainted water.

He was a part-time caretaker at the Montreal apartment building where he lived and had once studied to sell insurance, a landlord and an insurance company spokesman said. The suspect indicated to court officials that he has lived in Canada for 10 years and has three children. A pretrial services officer told a judge that he had worked on and off as a truck driver. He indicated "no mental or physical health problems

and no drug or alcohol use," the officer, Linsey Carson, said.

Police in Canada were searching a Montreal apartment. Montreal police spokesman Benoit Boiselle said officers were assisting the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in the search on behalf of an FBI request. Three people staying at the residence had been taken in for questioning, Boiselle said.

He legally entered the U.S. at Champlain, New York, on June 16 and was in Michigan by at least June 18, said Gellios, who would not say whether Ftouhi entered the U.S. under a so-called trusted traveler program.

He spent some time in public, unsecured areas of the airport before going to a restroom where he dropped two bags before attacking the officer with a 12-inch knife that had an 8-inch serrated blade, Gelios said.

Ftouhi asked an officer who subdued him why he did not kill him, according to the criminal complaint. Police described him as "cooperative" and said he was talking to investigators.

## Eclipse chasers blaze trail to Oregon for view of a lifetime

**GILLIAN FLACCUS, Associated Press**

MADRAS, Ore. (AP) — Just before sunrise, there's typically nothing atop Round Butte but the whistle of the wind and a panoramic view of Oregon's second-highest peak glowing pink in the faint light.

But on Aug. 21, local officials expect this lookout point just outside the small town of Madras to be crammed with people from around the world, all hoping for the first glimpse of the moon's shadow as it crosses Mount Jefferson's snow fields. Then, a solar eclipse will throw the entire region into complete darkness for two minutes.

The first coast-to-coast total solar eclipse to cross the continental United States in 99 years will first be visible in Oregon, and Madras is predicted to be among the country's best viewing spots because of its clear, high-desert skies, flat landscape and stunning mountain views.

Up to 1 million eclipse chasers will descend on Oregon for the celestial event, and officials are bracing for as many as 100,000 of them in and around Madras.

In this vast expanse of ranches and farms, rural, two-lane roads could mean traffic jams of cosmic proportions. Every hotel in Madras is booked, some residents are renting their homes for \$3,000 a night, and campers are expected to flood the national forests and grasslands during peak wildfire season.

The state's emergency coordination center will gear up, and first responders will prepare to respond to any trouble as they would for an earthquake or other natural disaster. Cell towers could be overwhelmed, traffic will be gridlocked, and police and fire stretched to the max managing the crowds.

"Bring extra water, bring food. You need to be prepared to be able to survive on your own for 24 to 48 to 72 hours, just like you would in any sort of emergency," said Dave Thompson, spokesman for the Oregon Department of Transportation. "This is pretty much a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, and it's really worth seeing. But you've got to be prepared or you won't enjoy it."

When the moon passes between the sun and the Earth, the path of totality — meaning total darkness — from the moon's shadow will begin on Oregon's coast, then cross the north-central part of the state from west to east.

But as the hype builds, authorities are increasingly worried that people who planned to watch from the notoriously foggy coast could move east at the last minute if the forecast sours. And Oregonians who live outside the path of totality could decide to drive to one of the prime viewing spots at the spur of the moment, creating havoc on the roads, said Cory Grogan, spokesman for the Oregon Office of Emergency Management.

In addition, many tourists will be camping in hot, tinder-dry conditions, or even sleeping in their cars. First responders have been planning for months for a worst-case scenario: evacuating tens of thousands of people while trying to get fire engines through gridlocked roads. Cellular towers also may be crippled by the volume of people texting, calling and posting photos, making it difficult for fire crews to communicate.

Federal and local officials will stage engines and other resources at key locations, and firefighters from other agencies and private companies will send extra crews. But it's impossible to plan for everything, and tourists frustrated with traffic may use forest access roads as shortcuts, further raising fire risk, said Kent

Koeller, a recreation planner with U.S. Forest Service outside Madras.

"Just driving off-road - having that contact with a hot muffler or a catalytic converter - could start an ignition," he said. "And in these fine fuels, it could spread very quickly."

Lysa Vattimo was hired two years ago to coordinate the town's planning efforts with more than 50 local, state and federal agencies. She spends her days trying to think of every possible consequence of having tens of thousands of people in a town of just 6,500 — and her nights worrying she missed something.

The town and surrounding campsites have rented nearly 700 portable toilets, including some from as far as Idaho, to meet demand. Sanitation trucks will run almost around the clock, transporting trash to 50-yard-long (46-meter-long) dumpsters before it rots in triple-digit temperatures.

Gas stations are filling their underground tanks in advance, and businesses are being told to use cash only, to avoid bringing down the wireless network. Banks are stocking their ATMs, local hospitals have canceled vacations, and pregnant women close to their due dates are being told to leave to avoid getting stuck.

"What we've asked our residents to do is get prepared ahead of time. About a week out, fuel up on propane, gas, whatever fuels they need, get their prescriptions, go to the doctor, do what you need to do," she said. "And then stay home."

In Madras, hotels were booked years ago, and spots at 25 campgrounds in and around the town are going fast. Farmers are renting out their land for pop-up campgrounds, and thousands of parking spaces for day trippers are getting snapped up.

The Black Bear Diner, one of the town's most popular restaurants, expects to serve 1,000 people a day during the week leading up to the eclipse. Owner Joe Davis has ordered five weeks of food for one week of business and will have an abbreviated menu of 10 items to speed service.

"The Black Bear Diner has been here in Madras 18 years, and I'm sure this will be by far the busiest week - and probably double the busiest week - that we've seen," he said.

But amid all the hubbub and anxiety, most residents have kept sight of the wonder.

Darlene Hoffman is one of the few here who watched the last total solar eclipse to touch Madras 38 years ago. Hoffman, 80, recalls how the birds stopped singing and the horses prepared to sleep as the sky gradually darkened and a hush fell over the land.

"It was really something to see. It really was," she said. "That amazed me more than anything."

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Follow Gillian Flaccus on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/gflaccus>

## North Korea says it's 'biggest victim' in US student's death

By KIM TONG-HYUNG, Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea on Friday called itself the "biggest victim" in the death of an American student who was detained for more than a year and died days after being released in a coma.

The North's official Korean Central News Agency denied that North Korea cruelly treated or tortured Otto Warmbier and accused the United States and South Korea of a smear campaign that insulted what it called its "humanitarian" treatment of him.

The comments published by KCNA were North Korea's first reaction to Otto Warmbier's death in a U.S. hospital Monday after it released him for what it called humanitarian reasons.

Doctors at the hospital said Warmbier had suffered a severe neurological injury from an unknown cause. Relatives say they were told the 22-year-old University of Virginia student had been in a coma since shortly after he was sentenced to 15 years of hard labor in North Korea in March 2016.

His family and others have blamed North Korea for his condition.

Warmbier was accused of stealing a propaganda poster. Through statements on KCNA, North Korea said it dealt with him according to its domestic laws and international standards.

"Although we had no reason at all to show mercy to such a criminal of the enemy state, we provided him with medical treatments and care with all sincerity on humanitarian basis until his return to the U.S., considering that his health got worse," the agency quoted an unidentified Foreign Ministry spokesman as

saying.

The spokesman said "groundless" speculation of torture and beatings could be refuted by American doctors who came to North Korea at the time of Warmbier's repatriation and "recognized that his health indicators like pulse, temperature, respiration and the examination result of the heart and lung were all normal." The report did not mention Warmbier's neurological status.

"The fact that Warmbier died suddenly in less than a week just after his return to the U.S. in his normal state of health indicators is a mystery to us as well," the spokesman said.

"To make it clear, we are the biggest victim of this incident and there would be no more foolish judgment than to think we do not know how to calculate gains and losses," he said.

"The smear campaign against (North Korea) staged in the U.S. compels us to make firm determination that humanitarianism and benevolence for the enemy are a taboo and we should further sharpen the blade of law," the spokesman added.

A separate KCNA article published hours earlier criticized South Korea for using Warmbier's case to seek the release of other detainees, including six South Korean citizens. South Korean President Moon Jae-in said in an interview with CBS television earlier this week that it was clear North Korea bears a heavy responsibility for Warmbier's death.

The article said South Korea was tarnishing North Korea's image with "slanderous talk about cruel treatment and torture."

It demanded that South Korea return 12 restaurant workers who defected to the South last year. South Korea said the women defected on their own, while North Korea claimed they were deceived and abducted to the South.

The United States, South Korea and others often accuse North Korea of using foreign detainees to wrest diplomatic concessions. Three Americans remain in custody in the North.

## **Philippines: IS funded siege through Malaysian militant**

MARAWI, Philippines (AP) — The Islamic State group helped fund the monthlong siege of a southern Philippine city through a Malaysian militant who was reportedly killed by troops, the Philippine military chief said Friday.

Gen. Eduardo Ano told The Associated Press that Malaysian Mahmud bin Ahmad reportedly channeled more than \$600,000 from the IS group to acquire firearms, food and other supplies for the attack in Marawi. Money believed to be from illegal drugs also funded the uprising, he said.

Mahmud was wounded in the fighting last month and reportedly died on June 7, he said. A local militant leader, Omarkhayam Maute, also is believed to have been killed in the early days of intense fighting and troops were looking for their remains to validate the intelligence the military had received.

Troops are seeking the help of villagers to pinpoint the spot where Mahmud was reportedly buried, Ano said.

In Kuala Lumpur, Malaysian police chief Khalid Abu Bakar acknowledged that Mahmud was in Marawi fighting with insurgents but said he believed the militant is still alive. Malaysian authorities are trying to determine the number of Malaysians who joined the siege but said at least four may have been killed in clashes.

Two other rebel leaders, top Filipino militant suspect Isnilon Hapilon and Maute's brother, Abdullah, were still fighting in Marawi, Ano said.

A former Malaysian university professor who became radicalized and received training in Afghanistan, Mahmud appeared in a video showing militant leaders planning the Marawi siege in a hideout, a sign of his key role in the uprising. The AP obtained a copy of the video, which was seized by troops May 23.

A month ago, about 500 local militants, along with some foreign fighters, stormed into Marawi, a bastion of the Islamic faith in the south of the predominantly Roman Catholic nation. Troops since then have killed about 280 gunmen, recovered nearly 300 assault firearms and regained control of 85 buildings. Many of the taller buildings were used as sniper posts to slow down the advance of government forces,

the military said.

At least 69 soldiers and police and 26 civilians have died in the fighting. Only four villages in Marawi remain in the hands of the militants, out of the 19 of 96 villages across the lakeside city of 200,000 people that the black flag-waving militants had occupied.

"They are constricted in a very small area. They're pinned down," Ano said. He said three boatloads of gunmen who tried to join the militants were blasted by navy gunboats three days ago in Lake Lanao, which borders Marawi.

Ano said the battle was taking longer because the militants were using civilians as human shields.

"We can just bomb them away or use napalm bombs to burn everything, but then, we will not be any different from them if we do that," he said.

The audacious attack by the heavily armed militants and their ability to hold on to large sections of a city for weeks surprised the government and sparked fears among Southeast Asian countries that the Islamic State group was moving to gain a foothold in the region.

Australian Defense Minister Marise Payne said the Philippines accepted an offer of two AP-3C Orion aircraft to provide surveillance to local troops. The U.S. military earlier deployed a spy plane and drones over Marawi.

Facing his worst crisis, President Rodrigo Duterte has declared martial law in the south to deal with the Marawi siege.

Powerful clans and warlords, along with insurgencies, have effectively weakened law enforcement in large areas of the country's south, making it easier for militants to take over an area and hold it, said Sidney Jones, director of the Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict in Jakarta, Indonesia.

"I do think that martial law doesn't solve the problem and I think military strikes, especially airstrikes, don't solve the problem," Jones said. "It's a much broader problem that needs a strategic solution."

Philippine Foreign Minister Alan Peter Cayetano and his Malaysian and Indonesian counterparts met with top security officials in Manila on Thursday to discuss the crisis. They agreed on a plan of action to combat terrorism and rising extremism and deal with the prospects of Asian fighters returning to their region from Syria and Iraq, where the IS group has been losing territory.

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Associated Press writers Jim Gomez and Teresa Cerojano in Manila, Philippines, Rod McGuirk in Canberra, Australia, Andi Jatmiko in Jakarta, Indonesia, and Eileen Ng in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, contributed to this report.

## Trump approves \$2B sale of drones to India ahead of meeting

By **MATTHEW PENNINGTON**, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration has authorized the sale of unarmed surveillance drones to India, the manufacturer said Friday, as the two nations' leaders prepare for their first face-to-face meeting.

India initiated its request to buy 22 Guardian MQ-9B unmanned aircraft for maritime surveillance last year. The deal is estimated to be worth about \$2 billion. The offer is still subject to congressional approval.

The green light from the administration marks a further deepening in defense ties as India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi meets with President Donald Trump at the White House on Monday.

Modi's two-day visit to Washington, which starts Sunday, takes place amid uncertainty over the relationship because of differences on trade and other issues.

So far in his presidency, Trump has focused on outreach to China, India's strategic rival, as he looks to Beijing to rein in North Korea. But Washington and New Delhi share concerns about China's rise as a military power.

India reportedly wants the drones for surveillance of the Indian Ocean — waters that China's navy increasingly traverses after establishing its first overseas base in the Horn of Africa nation of Djibouti. India's archrival Pakistan would also likely be opposed to the drone sale.

"We are pleased that the U.S. government has cleared the way for the sale of the MQ-9B Guardian to

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the Indian government," Linden Blue, CEO of the manufacturer, General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, said in a statement. Blue added that it would "significantly enhance India's sovereign maritime domain awareness in the Indo-Pacific."

A congressional staffer familiar with the matter confirmed the administration has approved the sale. The staffer was not authorized to discuss the potential deal and requested anonymity.

David McKeeby, spokesman for the State Department bureau of political-military affairs, said it does not comment on proposed defense sales before Congress is formally notified.

A senior White House official said Friday that the U.S. is interested in providing India the kind of high technology it provides to its closest allies and defense partners. That is important to the strategic partnership and for cooperation in areas like the Indian Ocean, and also creates U.S. jobs, said the official, who requested anonymity to brief reporters on the preparations for Modi's visit.

India does not have a formal alliance with the U.S., but defense ties have intensified in recent years with joint drills between the two militaries and defense sales. The South Asian nation, which has traditionally bought most of its defense equipment from Russia, is looking to upgrade its capabilities.

Since 2008, India has signed more than \$15 billion in U.S. defense contracts, including for C-130J and C-17 transport aircraft, P-8I maritime patrol aircraft, Harpoon missiles and Apache and Chinook helicopters.

Ashley Tellis, an expert on South Asia at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, said the U.S. decision to offer the Guardian aircraft to India is significant as the U.S. has a standing policy of declining export of such advanced drones other than to allies involved in combined operations with U.S. forces.

"Much bureaucratic china within the U.S. government had to be broken to get to this decision," he said.

There could still be pushback from Congress. While there is bipartisan support for closer U.S.-India security ties, some lawmakers remain wary of the export of U.S. drone technology to non-allies.

Modi, a Hindu nationalist, will be making his fourth visit to the U.S. since he took office in 2014. He forged a strong relationship with President Barack Obama, and on his last visit in June 2016, he addressed Congress and described the U.S. as an "indispensable partner."

The visit is likely to be lower key and aimed at building a personal bond between the two leaders, who have spoken twice by phone since Trump took office. Modi will be the first foreign dignitary to be hosted for dinner at the White House during Trump's presidency.

They share a populist streak and a knack for using social media, and are likely to find common ground on combating Islamic extremism. Modi will be urging a tougher stance on Pakistan over militants that India blames for attacks on its territory.

But there could be increased strains on trade issues.

India is among nations singled out by the Trump administration for their trade surpluses with the U.S., which in India's case totaled \$30.8 billion in 2016. New Delhi is also closely watching the administration's review of the H1B visa program, under which thousands of skilled Indian workers come to the U.S.

New Delhi was irked by Trump's decision to pull out of the Paris climate accord. In making the announcement, the U.S. president said New Delhi had made its participation "contingent on receiving billions and billions and billions of dollars in foreign aid." India denies that and says it will continue to be part of the accord, regardless of U.S. participation.

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Associated Press writer Vivian Salama contributed to this report.

## Consumer issues stemming from the GOP health care initiative

By RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Republicans in full control of government are on the brink of history-making changes to the nation's health care system. The impact for consumers would go well beyond "Obamacare."

Former President Barack Obama's signature law is usually associated with subsidized insurance markets like HealthCare.gov. But the Affordable Care Act also expanded Medicaid.

Not only would the GOP legislation scale back coverage through the insurance markets and phase out

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the Medicaid expansion, it would also make fundamental changes to the broader Medicaid program. The federal-state program covers low-income people, from newborns to elderly nursing home residents, from special-needs kids to young adults caught in the opioid epidemic.

House Republicans have passed their health care bill, and Senate GOP leaders are driving toward a vote next week. President Donald Trump is waiting, eager to deliver on a campaign promise to repeal the law. Against fast-moving developments, a look at some major issues for consumers.

## WHY MEDICAID MATTERS

As health care costs have kept climbing, employers cut back on coverage, and Medicaid passed Medicare as the nation's largest public insurance program. It now covers about 70 million people, including children and able-bodied adults mostly served by private managed care plans.

The GOP's biggest Medicaid change involves limiting future federal financing. Since its inception, Medicaid has been an open-ended entitlement, with Washington matching a share of what each state spends. Instead, Republicans propose a per-beneficiary cap.

In addition, the GOP would phase out added financing that Obama's law provided as an incentive for states to expand the program and cover more low-income adults. About 11 million are covered by the expansion.

The Congressional Budget Office estimated the House bill would reduce federal Medicaid spending by \$834 billion over 10 years, and the program would cover about 14 million fewer people by 2026, a 17 percent reduction.

Governors of both parties have warned Congress that would mean a cost shift to states that undermines coverage for the vulnerable.

Medicaid limits got very little attention in the 2016 presidential campaign. The idea was a relatively late addition to Trump's talking points. Indeed, candidate Trump had started out promising no cuts to Social Security, Medicare or Medicaid.

Economist Douglas Holtz-Eakin, a longtime GOP adviser, says the Republican approach is "180 degrees different in its economic and budgetary philosophy," from the course steered by Obama. The Medicaid limit would move the nation closer to putting public health care programs on a budget, fiscal discipline that conservatives say is long overdue.

But the human consequences could be politically volatile. "No one wins on health care policy," observed Holtz-Eakin.

## WHAT DOCTORS ARE SAYING

Groups representing doctors and hospitals are overwhelmingly opposed to the Republican approach, because it's likely to result in millions more uninsured people. Consumer organizations like AARP are also opposed.

Under Obama, the nation's uninsured rate dropped below 9 percent, a historic low. Progress has stalled, partly because "Obamacare" is politically divisive. Now, the uninsured rate may start climbing again, because both the House and Senate bills cut federal financing and repeal an unpopular requirement to carry health insurance.

It "would have a profoundly negative impact on Americans," said John Meigs, president of the American Academy of Family Physicians.

Some Republicans argue that a Medicaid card or an "Obamacare" policy means little because either the doctor doesn't accept notoriously low Medicaid fees, or high deductibles under the health law keep patients from coming in.

But doctors see a health insurance card as a ticket into the system, so patients can be screened for chronic conditions that can ultimately lead to serious illnesses. Obama's law made many preventive services free of charge to the patient.

Dr. Mott Blair of Wallace, N.C., recalls a patient who got a colonoscopy that found a polyp, which undetected could have led to colon cancer.

"Now we are able to bring them in and get their blood sugars down, their blood pressure down," Blair

said in a recent interview. "They're not going to have a disastrous complication like a stroke or a heart attack, at least not for the foreseeable future."

## PRIVATE INSURANCE CHANGES

Republicans would make no significant changes to employer-provided coverage, which remains the mainstay of private insurance.

They focus instead on the market for individual policies, which Obama's ACA sought to reform by providing subsidies, setting requirements for comprehensive coverage, and creating online markets where consumers could compare plans. An estimated 17 million to 20 million people have individual policies. About 10 million are in the ACA's markets.

"Obamacare's" results have been mixed, with lower enrollment than expected, big losses for many insurers, and sharp premium increases. The situation varies from state to state, with healthy markets in some and others struggling to hang on to insurers. Consumers who are not entitled to subsidies can face shockingly high premiums.

Both the House and Senate bills would keep subsidies for private insurance, although with considerably less money. The House and Senate formulas for subsidies differ. States would be able to seek waivers from federal insurance requirements.

The Senate bill takes immediate steps to stabilize insurance markets for the next two years.

Over the long run, premiums for younger people are expected to come down. But older adults and people who require comprehensive coverage are likely to pay more.

"Low-income people will end up paying higher premiums for plans that have bigger deductibles, compared to today," said Larry Levitt of the nonpartisan Kaiser Family Foundation, commenting on the Senate bill. "Older people who are now getting premium subsidies would get substantially less help, but younger people would get more."

## Breast milk jeweler ordered to refund customers, return milk

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (AP) — A Rhode Island company that makes jewelry from breast milk has been ordered to refund customers and return the breast milk they sent.

WPRI-TV reports a state Superior Court judge this week approved a judgment and temporary restraining order against MommyMilk Creations and owner Allicia Mogavero.

State Attorney General Peter Kilmartin's office sued this year after receiving several complaints from customers who said they'd sent the Westerly-based company bags of their breast milk but had been waiting as long as two years for it to send their promised creations.

The station says Mogavero must refund \$15,000 to 114 customers from across the country and as far away as Singapore.

The company promises on its website, "All remaining orders are being completed."

Information from: WPRI-TV, <http://www.wpri.com>

## Today in History By The Associated Press.

Today in History

Today is Saturday, June 24, the 175th day of 2017. There are 190 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On June 24, 1947, what's regarded as the first modern UFO sighting took place as private pilot Kenneth Arnold, an Idaho businessman, reported seeing nine silvery objects flying in a "weaving formation" near Mount Rainier in Washington.

On this date:

In 1497, the first recorded sighting of North America by a European took place as explorer John Cabot spotted land, probably in present-day Canada.

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In 1509, Henry VIII was crowned king of England; his wife, Catherine of Aragon, was crowned queen consort.

In 1793, the first republican constitution in France was adopted.

In 1807, a grand jury in Richmond, Virginia, indicted former Vice President Aaron Burr on charges of treason and high misdemeanor (he was later acquitted).

In 1908, Grover Cleveland, the 22nd and 24th president of the United States, died in Princeton, New Jersey, at age 71.

In 1939, the Southeast Asian country Siam changed its name to Thailand. (It went back to being Siam in 1945, then became Thailand once again in 1949.)

In 1948, Communist forces cut off all land and water routes between West Germany and West Berlin, prompting the western allies to organize the Berlin Airlift.

In 1957, the U.S. Supreme Court, in *Roth v. United States*, ruled 6-3 that obscene materials were not protected by the First Amendment.

In 1967, Pope Paul VI issued an encyclical, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, reaffirming the Catholic Church's position on priestly celibacy. The Jefferson Airplane single "White Rabbit," written by Grace Slick, was released by RCA Victor.

In 1975, 113 people were killed when Eastern Airlines Flight 66, a Boeing 727 carrying 124 people, crashed while attempting to land during a thunderstorm at New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport.

In 1987, comedian-actor Jackie Gleason died at his home in Lauderhill, Florida, at age 71.

In 1997, the U.S. Air Force released a report on the so-called "Roswell Incident," suggesting the "alien bodies" that witnesses reported seeing in 1947 were actually life-sized dummies. Actor Brian Keith was found dead in his Malibu home, an apparent suicide; he was 75.

Ten years ago: Ali Hassan al-Majid (ah-LEE' hah-SAHN' ahl mah-ZHEED'), Saddam Hussein's cousin known as "Chemical Ali," was sentenced by the Iraqi High Tribunal to hang for his role in the killings of up to 180,000 Kurdish men, women and children two decades earlier. (Al-Majid was executed in Jan. 2010.) Charles W. Lindberg, one of the U.S. Marines who raised the first of two American flags on Iwo Jima during World War II, died in Edina, Minnesota, at age 86.

Five years ago: The Muslim Brotherhood's Mohammed Morsi was declared the winner of Egypt's first free presidential election. New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman announced a settlement that would bring \$405 million to victims of Bernard Madoff's historic investment scam.

One year ago: President Barack Obama created the first national monument to gay rights, designating the site of the 1969 Stonewall riots in Manhattan. Republican Donald Trump, visiting Scotland, hailed Britain's vote to leave the European Union, drawing parallels to the anger driving his own presidential campaign.

Today's Birthdays: Rock singer Arthur Brown is 75. Actress Michele Lee is 75. Actor-director Georg Stanford Brown is 74. Rock musician Jeff Beck is 73. Rock singer Colin Blunstone (The Zombies) is 72. Musician Mick Fleetwood is 70. Actor Peter Weller is 70. Rock musician John Illsley (Dire Straits) is 68. Actress Nancy Allen is 67. Reggae singer Derrick Simpson (Black Uhuru) is 67. Actor Joe Penny is 61. Reggae singer Astro (UB40) is 60. Singer-musician Andy McCluskey (Orchestral Manoeuvres in the Dark) is 58. Rhythm-and-blues/pop singer-songwriter Siedah (sy-EE'-dah) Garrett is 57. Actor Iain Glen is 56. Rock singer Curt Smith is 56. Actress Danielle Spencer is 52. Actress Sherry Stringfield is 50. Singer Glenn Medeiros is 47. Actress Carla Gallo is 42. Actress-producer Mindy Kaling is 38. Actress Minka Kelly is 37. Actress Vanessa Ray is 36. Actor Justin Hires ("MacGyver" "Rush Hour") is 32. Actress Candice Patton is 32. Actress Kaitlin Cullum is 31. Singer Solange Knowles is 31. Actor Max Ehrich is 36.

Thought for Today: "I'm sure the universe is full of intelligent life. It's just been too intelligent to come here." — Sir Arthur C. Clarke, British science-fiction author (1917-2008).