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Official Notices

Frederick Town (updated 7-18)
Brown County Book (Updated 7-16)
Groton City Book (updated 7-11)
Groton Area School Book
Other Official Notices Book
Claremont Town Official Notices Book
Frederick Area School Book

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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Senior Menu: Bratwurst with bun, mashed potatoes, sauerkraut, green beans, German chocolate cake.

United Methodist: Wednesday Coffee time, 9 a.m.; Ad Council, 7:15 p.m.

Outdoor Story Time: at the Little Free Library located south of the Methodist Church, 10:30 a.m.

Olive Grove: Men's League, 6 p.m.

20

Senior Menu: Lemon chicken breast, creamy noodles, spinach salad, baked apple slices, whole wheat bread.

Jr. Legion: host Northville, 6 p.m., DH (postponed to July 27th in Northville, 6 p.m.)

21

Senior Menu: Taco salad, Mexican rice, seasonal fresh fruit, breadstick.

Legion: State at Winner

Amateurs: hosts Northville, 7 p.m.



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13556 400th Ave., Groton SD 57445
Allen McKiver, Owner ~ 605/397-4404

Chicken Soup
for the Soul

“A friend is one of the nicest things you can have, and one of the best things you can be.”

-Douglas Pagels



Drought Conditions Stressing Lawns And Gardens

Column by David Graper

SDSU Extension Horticulture Specialist & Master Gardener Program Coordinator

The most recent U.S. Drought Monitor South Dakota Map, shows that more than 90 percent of South Dakota is already under abnormally dry to extreme drought conditions.

While some areas of the state did receive some rain over the last two weeks, showers were very spotty with many areas not getting any rain at all. Many people had patchy areas of dead grass in their lawns this spring and now many lawns consisting of cool-season grasses like Kentucky bluegrass, perennial ryegrass or fine fescues are turning brown and going dormant.

Watering restrictions.

Many communities have already or will be imposing watering restrictions. Since the drought the last couple of years lasted so long, many people just gave up watering entirely.

Or, for some people, it is just not practical to water a large lawn, particularly if they do not have a lawn irrigation system installed. Many people choose not to water their lawns, knowing that it will likely go dormant and turn brown during the heat of the summer, expecting that it would green up again in the fall.

Cool-season grasses

In most years, lack of watering is not a problem, but when no rain falls for several weeks in a row, permanent damage can occur to cool-season grass lawns.

If the crowns, where the growing points or buds of the individual grass plants are located, get too desiccated, they will die and not regrow. They don't need much moisture to remain viable, just two-tenths-of-one-inch of rain or irrigation every two to three weeks is enough to keep those crowns alive and allow them to regrow with heavier rain or irrigation later in the fall.

Managing drought-stress lawns

Typically, when temperatures cool in the fall we also get rainfall to reinvigorate lawns and other plants. However, for many lawns last fall, this did not happen.

The grass plants went into winter and freezing temperatures under water stress. These stressed plants were also not able to store up as many food reserves to help them get through the winter months.

The lack of snowfall also left these grass plants exposed to drying winds much of the winter, further damaging the individual grass plants.

Over-seeding, renovation and weed control

If your lawn did not green up this spring, even though you had rain or you irrigated, you may need to consider over-seeding or renovating the lawn this fall.

Also, If it appears that your lawn is mostly weeds, this may be another reason to consider total renovation of the lawn.

This generally involves a lot more preparation of the seedbed than just re-seeding a few bare spots. A non-selective, non-residual herbicide, like glyphosate, can help get rid of the old weeds and grass to help you get off to a clean start.

Keep in mind that the herbicide will not be very effective until the weeds are actively growing - it is not likely to do much good now if the weeds are also stressed and not growing much with the drought.

Generally, it is better now to wait until fall to try to renovate an old lawn. Generally temperatures will be cooler, moisture conditions are better, and warm-season weeds like crabgrass will be slowing in their growth and die with the first freeze.

Seeding and watering

Whenever you decide to plant your grass plants, either by over-seeding or renovating in the fall, it is critical that you keep the seedbed moist until germination of the grass seed is complete.

This can often take three weeks, particularly for some species like Kentucky bluegrass.

You need to be patient and persistent with light, frequent irrigation or watering to keep that top inch of soil moist until the new seedlings emerge. Then you should decrease the frequency of watering and water more deeply instead.

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Adjusting mower height

Generally, the best way to keep your lawn looking green this summer includes more than just lots of watering.

First of all, raise your mowing height.

If you allow your grass to grow taller, it will develop a deeper root system so it can take up more water that might be available deeper in the soil. Mow frequently enough so that you do not remove more than one-third of the grass plant's height.

It is OK to leave the clippings fall on the lawn, particularly if you use a mulching mower. Those chopped up clippings act as mulch to help cool the soil and grass plants and as the clippings break down, they recycle nutrients to the soil. Make sure to keep your mower blades sharp.

Dull mower blades make ragged cuts to the grass leaves, allowing them to lose more moisture.

Fertilize in moderation. Most people can get by with 1 to 2 pounds of actual nitrogen per 1,000-square-foot-per-year with most of the fertilizer applied in the fall.

Finally, water infrequently and deeply. The objective is to saturate the root zone, usually down to about 4-to-6 inches deep. Then, the root zone should be allowed to dry out somewhat before you water again.

In a well-drained soil, this could mean watering once per week, applying about 1-inch of water at a time. If the soil is clayey or slow to absorb water, you might need to break up the irrigation so that you may apply half an inch of water twice a week.

Avoid watering every day or even every other day.

This tends to keep the very top of the soil profile saturated which discourages root growth down deeper in the soil and also excludes oxygen from the upper layer of the soil which leads to thatch accumulation and potentially disease problems later on.

Warm-season vs. cool-season grasses

There are of course other options to having a cool-season grass lawn.

Utilizing native warm-season grasses and other plants in your yard, instead of trying to maintain a lush green lawn may be another viable alternative that can be aesthetically pleasing and also benefit wildlife, butterflies and other aspects of the environment.

Buffalo grass and blue grama are warm-season lawn grasses that grow well in the summer and can tolerate hot and dry weather better than cool-season grasses. However, they are slow to green up in the Spring and quickly turn brown in the fall when temperatures drop, usually in October.

Broadleaf weed control in warm season grasses can also be more challenging in that the typical herbicides used for controlling weeds in most cool-season grasses can cause some damage to buffalo grass.

Vegetable garden management

Vegetables can also become severely stressed if they are not provided with supplemental irrigation during dry periods.

Other plants like perennial flowers, shrubs and even trees are now suffering from these dry conditions too. Providing supplemental irrigation when needed while also conserving water where possible is a worthy goal of any gardener.

Drip irrigation is a good option to consider for the vegetable garden as well as for plants in your landscape.

Drip irrigation systems can be set up easily using ooze hoses, drip tape or drip tubing.

Just place it along the row while the plants are still young. Then, when the soil dries out, turn it on and it will water just along the row and not the whole garden. Since the water just oozes or slowly drips out of the tubes or hoses, spraying water up in the air means much of it will be lost to evaporation before it even gets to the plants' roots.

There are also other benefits besides just saving water too. It also helps to reduce weed growth in between the rows and keeps the foliage and fruit dry to reduce disease problems.

Placing the ooze hoses or drip lines beneath mulch also helps further reduce water loss by shading the soil and reducing evaporation.

FEATURED TREE: Hybrid Poplar *Populus deltoids* x *Populus nigra*

There are many crosses that go by the name hybrid poplar, but this one between eastern cottonwood from the United States and black poplar from Europe and North Africa has been a long-time favorite.

Hybrid poplars are the thoroughbreds of the tree world. Their claim to fame is their fast growth and lean stature. They are great landscape trees when you want to add quick shade and visual appeal.

This cottonless hybrid with silvery-green leaves works well for visual screens and soil stabilization. It grows up to 8 feet a year and reaches 50 feet at maturity, (hardiness zones 3-9).

Attributes

This tree:

Grows at a very rapid rate, as much as 5-8' per year.

Is a cottonless hybrid.

Features triangular leaves that are 3-6" long and 4-5" wide with slightly rounded teeth around the margin. The leaves are dark to silvery green on top with paler undersides.

Can be grown for a number of uses including firewood, chemical runoff filtration, windbreak protection (while slower-growing species mature), paper and fuel.

Grows in an oval shape.

Has a relatively short lifespan.

Is prone to limb breakage and is therefore not recommended for planting next to play areas, patios, sidewalks or anywhere else damage may be caused.

Wildlife Value

Hybrid poplar bark, twigs and leaves are eaten by rodents, rabbits, deer, beavers and porcupines. It provides forage for browsing wildlife such as white-tailed and mule deer up through the sapling stage. It also provides important nesting and roosting habitat for various species of birds.

History/Lore

There are many crosses that go by the name "hybrid poplar," but this one between eastern cottonwood from the United States and black poplar from Europe and North Africa has been a favorite for a very long time. Botanists and hobbyists in colonial times are said to have exchanged the parent trees across the ocean, with both natural and artificial hybrids soon resulting. The oldest account of the tree was given by a scientist in 1785.



THINKING ABOUT HEALTH

By Trudy Lieberman, Rural Health News Service

U.S. Healthcare Ranked Lower Than In Most Developed Nations

One thing I haven't heard much in this latest healthcare debate is that the U.S. has the best health system in the world. That's different from the last two times around.

When the nation debated the Clinton health plan in 1994 and the Affordable Care Act in 2009-2010, a huge talking point for politicians and special business interests opposed to reform was, "The American system is so good, why change it?"

It's different this year. Maybe that's because the public realizes America doesn't have the best, and their own interactions with what American healthcare has become tell them a different story. The old talking point doesn't compute any more.

Of course, we've all had some good experiences. And we generally continue to believe that the money we spend on super expensive technology and medicines equates to good care even though evidence shows those costly interventions may not deliver as advertised and actually may be harmful.

However, taken as a whole and measured on several dimensions, including access to care, administrative efficiency, equity, and health outcomes, the U.S. compares poorly relative to other industrialized countries.

In its latest study comparing the U.S. with 10 other countries – the United Kingdom, Australia, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, Germany, Canada, and France – the U.S. ranks dead last. This is the sixth time since 2004 that The Commonwealth Fund, which supports Thinking About Health columns, has done such a survey.

"Each time we have managed to be last," says Eric Schneider, a senior vice president of the Fund.

I've been writing about these http://www.commonwealthfund.org/~media/files/publications/fund-report/2017/jul/schneider_mirror_mirror_2017.pdf surveys since they began, but this time the findings really grabbed my attention, especially this:

In the U.S. 44 percent of people with incomes below the median – about \$55,700 in 2015 – reported that the cost of care prevented them from getting medical treatment they needed. Twenty-six percent of those with incomes above the median also said financial barriers prevent them from getting care.

That means that the high deductibles and high coinsurance that most health plans now require makes it hard to pay for care.

By contrast in the U.K. only 7 percent of people with low incomes and only 4 percent of those with higher incomes said they had trouble getting care. Yes, that's England, the nation whose National Health Service has been much maligned by American politicians over the years.

In this latest survey, the U.K. ranked number one overall and was judged the best when it came to equity and the process of care - preventive care, safe care, coordinated care and patient preferences - and third when it came to access. People in Britain seem to be doing OK despite all those queues for services Americans have heard about from the media.

When it came to equity, access to care, and health outcomes, the U.S. ranked last, which also challenges the common assumption we have the best care in the world.

The U.S. has given a lot of attention to healthcare over the past decade, and the positive changes made by the Affordable Care Act have substantially decreased the number of uninsured and provided generous subsidies to help them buy coverage. I would have expected our rankings to improve. I asked Schneider about that.

He explained that the lack of universal coverage is a barrier and the cost of care is still too high for too many Americans, even if they have insurance. Families with incomes in the middle ranges of eligibility for ACA subsidies – incomes of around \$60,000 or \$70,000 - get small subsidies and face high deductibles and other cost-sharing, a trade-off they must make if they can afford only plans with low premiums.

Our complicated system of getting medical bills paid and the endless negotiations between providers and insurers – in other words, the administrative hassle - is also a huge drawback. Fifty-four percent of U.S. primary care doctors said insurance restrictions made it hard to get needed treatment for their patients,

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Schneider said. "That's a big problem."

The U.K., Australia, and New Zealand shine on this dimension. Schneider said that if the U.S. changed the way it pays providers, used fee schedules and global budgets - an amount a country, group, or hospital decides it will spend on care - the public would benefit.

Just as important, Schneider told me, was the lack of U.S. investment in primary care compared to other countries where primary care is more widely and uniformly available. They dedicate a greater percentage of their medical workforce to that kind of care rather than specialty care. The U.S favors expensive specialists.

So does the U.S. do well on anything? Although we ranked last on overall health outcomes such as life expectancy at age 60, there were bright spots such as breast cancer survival and fewer hospital deaths for heart attacks and stroke.

Those few achievements are simply not good enough.

What's your biggest beef with the healthcare system? Write to Trudy at trudy.lieberman@gmail.com.



"Always Being Made New"

Ladies' Luncheon & Program

Wednesday, July 19 – Noon

Bethesda Lutheran Church, Bristol

Silent Auction at 11 a.m. – Door Prizes
Pastor Rhia Strohm, Bethlehem Lutheran
Church – speaker

Advance tickets please: \$10

Call Kay Espeland 492-3507

Alice Jean Peterson 492-3351

or contact any WELCA member

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Deadlines Approaching for SD State Fair Entries

(Huron, SD) - Deadlines for all South Dakota State Fair open class entries are right around the corner. The static entry deadline is Monday, July 31.

An online entry process is available at www.sd-statefair.com. Exhibitors are encouraged to use the online entry process.

"We integrated the ability to enter online into our open class programs last year," said Peggy Besch, SD State Fairgrounds manager. "To find the online entry forms, log onto sdstatefair.com, find the competitive events tab at the top of the page, and click on 'livestock' or 'static' in the drop down box."



For those mailing in entry forms, entries postmarked on July 31 will be accepted. Remember to include payment and completed W9 form (include SSN) with your entry.

Other upcoming deadlines include open class livestock and horse entries on Tuesday, Aug. 1. Late fees will apply to entries received after the deadline.

Premium books are available online at www.sdstatefair.com.

The 2017 South Dakota State Fair will run from Thursday, Aug. 31, through Monday, Sept. 4. Channel Seeds preview night will be Wednesday, Aug. 30. This year's theme is "Seriously Twisted Fun." For more information on State Fair events, contact the Fair office at 800-529-0900, visit www.sdstatefair.com or find them on Facebook or Twitter.

Agriculture is a major contributor to South Dakota's economy, generating \$25.6 billion in annual economic activity and employing over 115,000 South Dakotans. The South Dakota Department of Agriculture's mission is to promote, protect and preserve South Dakota agriculture for today and tomorrow. Visit SDDA online at <http://sdda.sd.gov> or find us on Facebook and Twitter. SD Ag Chat podcasts can be found <http://sdda.sd.gov/news>. You may subscribe to SD Ag Chat, free of charge, through Google Play Music, iTunes or from <https://sdagchat.podbean.com/>.

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Today in Weather History

July 19, 1933: An F2 tornado moved ESE from west of Tulare to 3 miles ENE of Hitchcock. About ten farms had damage, and several barns were destroyed.

July 19, 2010: Severe storms produced a wide swath of hail and high winds from northern Butte County, through southern Meade, eastern Pennington, Jackson, and Bennett Counties. Millions of dollars in crop damage was reported, along with some damage to homes and automobiles.

1886: A hurricane from the Gulf of Mexico crossed Florida causing considerable damage from Cedar Keys to Jacksonville. Three early season hurricanes striking Florida made the Hurricane Season of 1886 one of the busiest on record.

2006: A derecho impacted a sellout crowd of almost 44,000 St. Louis Cardinals fans, packed into the new Busch Stadium. Winds of about 80 mph whirled around the St. Louis area, sending the fans running for shelter. The winds knocked out power and broke windows out of the press box. Nearly two minutes after the winds began at 100 mph, they stopped, and it started to rain. In all, about 30 people were injured at the stadium.

1960 - Cow Creek and Greenland Ranch in Death Valley, CA, reported morning lows of 102 degrees. The afternoon high at Greenland Ranch was 124 degrees, and the high at Cow Creek that afternoon was 126 degrees. The coolest low for the entire month for both locations was 82 degrees. (The Weather Channel)

1974 - A severe thunderstorm with winds to 80 mph and up to two inches of rain washed out four to five foot deep sections of roadway in Lake Havasu City, AZ. Three persons in a station wagon died as it was carried 3000 feet down a wash by a ten foot wall of water. (The Weather Channel)

1977 - Thunderstorms produced torrential rains over parts of southwestern Pennsylvania. Some places receive more than twelve inches in a seven hour period. The heavy rains cause flash flooding along streams resulting in widespread severe damage. The cloudburst floods Johnstown with up to ten feet of water resulting in 76 deaths, countless injuries, and 424 million dollars damage. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Fifteen cities in the western and the southeastern U.S. reported record low temperatures for the date, including Winnemucca, NV, with a reading of 33 degrees. Flagstaff AZ reported a record low of 34 degrees. Afternoon and evening thunderstorms produced severe weather in New York State and New Jersey. High winds and hail two inches in diameter injured two persons and caused considerable damage to crops in the Pine Island area of central New York State. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Thunderstorms in Nebraska produced more than five inches of rain at Red Cloud, including two inches in fifteen minutes. Torrid temperatures continued over California, with record highs of 115 degrees at Red Bluff and 116 degrees at Redding. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)








1989 - Early morning thunderstorms in the Lower Mississippi Valley produced 5.50 inches of rain south of Alexander, AR, in just ninety minutes, and flash flooding which resulted claimed the life of one woman. Thunderstorms in Indiana produced 4.95 inches of rain in twelve hours east of Muncie. Eight cities in the southwestern U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date, including Las Vegas, NV, with a reading of 115 degrees, and Phoenix, AZ, with a high of 116 degrees. The low that night at Phoenix of 93 degrees was the warmest of record for that location. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

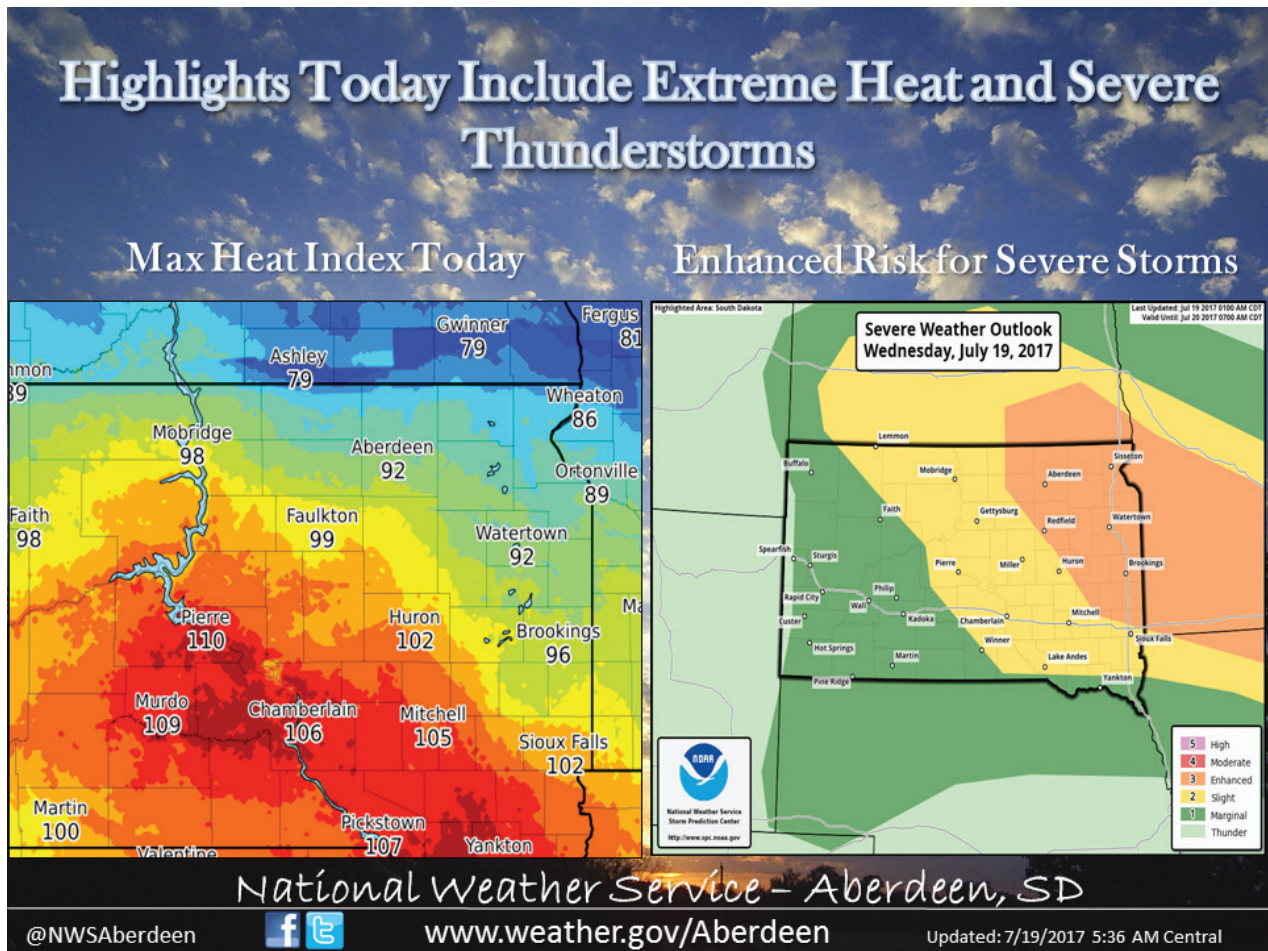
2005 - A severe heat wave gripped the region during early to mid-July. Las Vegas, NV tied their all-time record high temperature of 117 degrees, equalling the old record set on July 24, 1942.

2006 - The first of two severe thunderstorms hits the St. Louis area, causing the largest power outage in the city's history with over 570,000 people losing electricity.

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Today	Tonight	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday
 100% → 40%		 30%	 40%		 30%	 40%
T-storms and Windy then Chance T-storms	Mostly Clear	Mostly Sunny then Chance T-storms	Chance T-storms	Hot	Chance T-storms	Chance T-storms
High: 81 °F	Low: 59 °F	High: 87 °F	Low: 65 °F	High: 91 °F	Low: 67 °F	High: 87 °F



A warm front will lift northward into the region, bringing hot temperatures back into the area, along with strong to severe thunderstorm potential. First the heat - highs in the 100s can be expected across central and south central South Dakota. Combine these temperatures with dewpoints in the 60s, and heat index values will range from 100 to as high as 110 degrees. A Heat Advisory is in effect today for portions of the region. As for thunderstorms, the Storm Prediction Center has upgraded eastern South Dakota and western Minnesota into an Enhanced Risk for severe storms, with the rest of the forecast area in a Slight Risk. Large hail and strong winds are possible today into this evening, along with a small tornado threat across northeast South Dakota and west central Minnesota. Please stay tuned to the latest forecasts throughout the day concerning the heat and severe thunderstorm potential.

Published on: 07/19/2017 at 5:42AM

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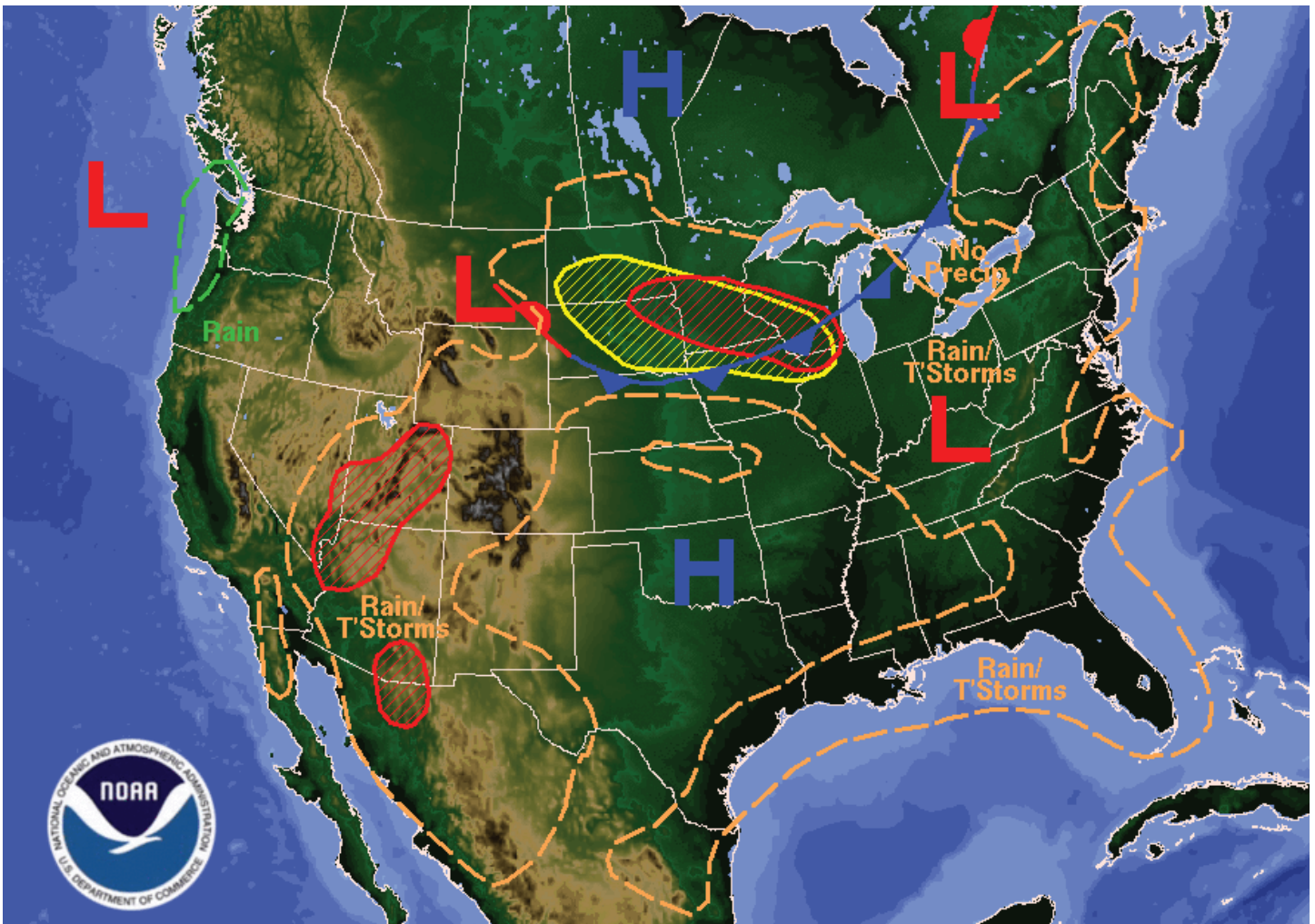
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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 82.3 F at 5:56 PM
Heat Index: 84.0 at 5:56 PM
Low Outside Temp: 56.6 F at 7:21 AM
High Gust: 46.0 Mph at 6:04 AM
Precip: 0.63

Today's Info

Record High: 106° in 1932
Record Low: 42° in 1900
Average High: 84°F
Average Low: 60°F
Average Precip in July: 1.97
Precip to date in July: 0.80
Average Precip to date: 12.81
Precip Year to Date: 6.57
Sunset Tonight: 9:15 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:04 a.m.



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Wed, Jul 19, 2017, issued 4:53 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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RESTORATION

The word "want" in this Psalm covers anything and everything that we might ever desire. It is all inclusive – covering the mental, physical and emotional as well as the spiritual areas of our lives. And if a "want" is important to us, we need to realize that it was important to God before we ever recognized it.

David left none of our "wants" beyond God's grace and mercy. Even the important need to "lie down" in "green pastures" beside "still waters" so our "souls" could be "restored" is important to the Good Shepherd! It is so important to Him that He often makes us take time to replenish and refresh ourselves.

There are times when He intervenes in our lives and causes us to "be still." Why? Not only does He want to guide us but He often has to guard us from ourselves. Jesus said, "Come apart and rest awhile." If we refuse to "rest awhile" we may "come apart" and then need Him to be put us back together again so He can use us.

The Good Shepherd loves and cares for His sheep. He not only guides them but guards them. His protection brings His peace and with His peace comes His promise to make us "lie down beside still waters" where He will "restore" us – refresh and renew us.

In our frantic lives God expects us to rest in Him, trust in Him, take time for Him and worship Him. If we do not follow His pattern He may even force His rest upon us in ways we would not choose. We need the benefits that come from resting in Him and with Him.

Prayer: Help us, Lord, to recognize our need to be alone with You and be renewed, refreshed and restored. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 23:1 The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.

News from the Associated Press

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

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

Mega Millions

08-12-23-51-73, Mega Ball: 6, Megaplier: 4

(eight, twelve, twenty-three, fifty-one, seventy-three; Mega Ball: six; Megaplier: four)

Estimated jackpot: \$232 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$187 million

Board of Technical Education chooses officers

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota Board of Technical Education has elected officers at its first official meeting.

The Department of Education said Tuesday that Dana Dykhous of Sioux Falls was elected to serve as board president for a two-year term. Members chose Bob Faehn of Watertown as vice president and Terry Sabers of Mitchell as secretary.

The new board oversees South Dakota's four technical institutes. Dykhous says the tech schools are key contributors to the state's workforce development efforts.

The panel also started the search process for an executive director to join the leadership team.

South Dakota fund to speed criminal mental health screenings

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Officials in South Dakota are establishing a fund to speed up mental-health screenings for criminal defendants.

The effort aims to find ways to improve how mentally ill defendants interact with the criminal justice system, The Argus Leader (<http://argusne.ws/2vyMZ4F>) reported. The fund will be overseen by the South Dakota Association of County Commissioners.

Department of Social Services spokeswoman Tia Kafka said the state agency is working with the Association of County Commissioners to give counties funding that had previously been given to the Human Services Center for court-ordered forensic evaluation.

Executive Director Bob Wilcox said that in order to qualify counties will submit an application to his office detailing the cost for a competency screening.

"This is going to be a really positive shot in the arm to help with these costs and a very welcomed relief," Wilcox said.

Currently, the state's resources for mental competency evaluations are struggling to keep up with the demand.

Kafka said the funds will give counties more flexibility for competency evaluations.

Wendy Giebink is the executive director of the South Dakota Chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness. She said having such a fund could help lessen the wait time for criminal defendants' evaluation.

"If that decreases the amount of time they are waiting in jail and not receiving mental health treatment in their communities, it will be helpful," Giebink said. "We know that being incarcerated can make people with mental illness sicker, and jail is not the appropriate place for them to get medical treatment."

Secretary of State closes 2017 budget year with surplus

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota Secretary of State Shantel Krebs says that her office has ended the 2017 budget year with a surplus, returning more than \$30,000 to the state general fund.

Krebs said Tuesday that the office also generated roughly \$7 million in general fund revenue in the 2017 budget year, an increase of nearly \$460,000 over the previous year.

The 2017 fiscal year ended June 30.

Krebs' office says it has taken steps to offer a more business-friendly experience including upgrading technology and reducing the time required to file new business documents by switching from mail to online.

Krebs says it's important to her and her staff to be good stewards of taxpayer money.

Court-appointed attorney denied in animal neglect case

ASHTON, S.D. (AP) — A judge has denied a court-appointed attorney for an Ashton man accused of starving his cattle.

Aberdeen News (<http://bit.ly/2uFzoeq>) reports Magistrate Judge Mark Anderson has ruled that Rex Spear has enough money to hire his own attorney. The 63-year-old Spear is charged with animal abuse and neglect.

Prosecutors say starving cattle were found on his property in Spink County, prompting the seizure of 75 head of cattle and one horse. He was arrested in June and posted bond.

He's due back in court Aug. 7.

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

Months needed for additional study of Dakota Access pipeline

By **BLAKE NICHOLSON, Associated Press**

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — Additional environmental review of the disputed Dakota Access oil pipeline is likely to take the rest of the year to complete, U.S. officials said in court documents in which they also advocate for keeping the line operating during the study.

Developer Energy Transfer Partners also is asking U.S. District Judge James Boasberg to keep the line open, saying a shutdown would cost the Texas-based company \$90 million each month.

The \$3.8 billion pipeline from North Dakota to Illinois was finished after President Donald Trump pushed through its completion despite opposition and an ongoing lawsuit by American Indian tribes, who fear environmental harm. Since June 1 it has been moving nearly half of the daily oil production in North Dakota, the nation's second-leading producer behind Texas — a total so far of more than 18 million barrels, or 756 million gallons.

Boasberg last month ruled that the Army Corps of Engineers largely complied with environmental law when permitting the pipeline but that it didn't adequately consider how an oil spill under the Missouri River might affect the Standing Rock Sioux tribe. He ordered the Corps to reconsider certain areas of its environmental analysis and is accepting arguments from attorneys this summer on whether he should shut down the pipeline while the work is done — a move he has said "would carry serious consequences that a court should not lightly impose."

Corps attorneys in documents filed Monday maintain that the agency expects to be able to substantiate its earlier determination that the pipeline poses no significant environmental threats.

"The low possibility of an oil spill means that there is little chance that (tribal) plaintiffs will be harmed at any time, much less during the remand period, which is anticipated to be completed by the end of the year," Corps attorney Reuben Schiffman wrote.

Standing Rock attorney Jan Hasselman in an interview said the comments indicate the Corps plans to "simply paper over the existing decision." He called for shutting down the pipeline and bringing in independent experts as "the only way to ensure the integrity of this new process."

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ETP attorney William Scherman said in court documents that oil producers and refiners, workers, customers, consumers and government tax revenue would be affected by a shutdown

"The process of temporarily shutting down a 1,200-mile pipeline is itself extremely costly, immensely complicated and burdensome, time-consuming, and ultimately more of a risk to the environment than allowing the flow of oil to continue," Scherman wrote.

The company already experienced months of delays in getting the pipeline operational due to the court battle and on-the-ground protests in North Dakota, and more delay "would add insult to injury," he said.

Several state and national energy and manufacturing trade groups, including the American Petroleum Institute, have asked Boasberg to let them have a say in the debate, saying a shutdown would harm businesses throughout the domestic energy industry. The North Dakota Petroleum Council, which represents more than 500 energy companies including ETP, said no one involved in the lawsuit speaks for the general oil industry.

"The completion of DAPL marked the first time that North Dakota and this region have enjoyed adequate pipeline capacity," council attorneys said. A shutdown likely would cut oil production, increase less-safe rail shipping, increase shipping expenses for companies, harm state tax revenue and impact "untold thousands of royalty owners," they said.

Follow Blake Nicholson on Twitter at: <http://twitter.com/NicholsonBlake>

Hutterite colony by Stratford plans to grow swine facility

STRATFORD, S.D. (AP) — A Hutterite colony near Stratford is planning to expand its swine operation. The American News (<http://bit.ly/2vy6gDv>) reports that an application has been submitted to grow the animal feeding operation by 2,400 head of swine to a total of nearly 10,000 head.

The state Department of Environment and Natural Resources says in a public notice that the facility will also include 770 beef cattle, nearly 150 mature dairy cows and 125 dairy heifers.

The department is accepting public comments on the proposed expansion through Aug. 19. A Brown County commission would also have to approve the application.

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

Mount Rushmore ceremony held for National Guard unit

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A small South Dakota Army National Guard unit is heading for duty overseas. The Rapid City-based 216th Engineer Detachment is a three-member firefighting team. The soldiers will be serving nine months in Romania, supporting U.S. and international operations in Europe.

A send-off ceremony was held Monday at Mount Rushmore National Memorial. The soldiers will head overseas after completing final training at Fort Bliss in Texas.

It's the second mobilization since 9/11 for the 216th, which served in Iraq from December 2003 to June 2005.

Spring wheat harvest gets underway in dry South Dakota

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The spring wheat harvest has gotten underway in South Dakota as the winter wheat and oats harvests progress.

The weekly crop report from the federal Agriculture Department says dry conditions in the state continue to stress crops, rangeland and livestock.

Topsoil moisture supplies statewide are rated 85 percent short or very short. Subsoil moisture is 79 percent in those categories.

In the ranching community, pasture and range conditions are rated 68 percent poor or very poor. Stock water supplies are 57 percent in those categories.

The latest U.S. Drought Monitor map shows nearly 11 percent of South Dakota in extreme drought and roughly 31 percent of the state in severe drought.

Brain scans may change care for some people with memory loss

By LAURAN NEERGAARD, AP Medical Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Does it really take an expensive brain scan to diagnose Alzheimer's? Not everybody needs one but new research suggests that for a surprising number of patients whose memory problems are hard to pin down, PET scans may lead to changes in treatment.

The findings, reported Wednesday, mark a first peek at a huge study under way to help determine if Medicare should start paying for specialized PET scans that find a hallmark of Alzheimer's — a sticky plaque called amyloid.

Alzheimer's is the most common form of dementia, and classic symptoms plus memory tests often are enough for a reliable diagnosis. But unusual symptoms could mark another form of dementia that, while there are no cures, could require different symptom care. And on the other end of the spectrum, it's hard to tell if mild memory loss might be an early Alzheimer's signal, a more treatable condition such as depression, or even age-related decline.

"We're not accurate enough," said Dr. Gil Rabinovici of the University of California, San Francisco, who is leading the new research.

"Patients know there's something wrong. Often they can sense in their gut that it's not normal aging," he added. Without a clear-cut test, "doctors are very reluctant to make the diagnosis in many cases."

Until a few years ago, amyloid build-up could only be seen during autopsies. Older types of PET scans show what region of the brain appears most affected, of limited help.

Yet it's not clear how best to use the new amyloid-detecting scans, which can cost up to \$6,000. They can rule out Alzheimer's if there's little amyloid. But cognitively healthy seniors can harbor amyloid, too, and Medicare won't pay for the new scans outside of a few research studies.

One of those is the IDEAS study, which is testing the impact of amyloid-detecting PET scans in more than 18,000 Medicare beneficiaries. To enroll, patients either must have atypical dementia with an unclear cause — or have particularly puzzling "mild cognitive impairment," or MCI, early memory problems that raise the risk of later developing dementia. Researchers check if doctors' initially recorded treatment plans — medications, counseling or additional testing — were altered by patients' PET results.

That happened in about two-thirds of the cases, according to preliminary findings from nearly 4,000 patients who were the first to enroll.

Most changes involved medications that can temporarily ease Alzheimer's symptoms, said Rabinovici, who presented the findings at the Alzheimer's Association International Conference in London. The PET scans found 70 percent of the dementia patients indeed had amyloid build-up, pointing out those who might benefit from those drugs and those who won't.

More intriguing, just 54 percent of the MCI patients had amyloid build-up, putting them at higher risk for later Alzheimer's. For the rest, "Alzheimer's disease was effectively ruled out, so it's something else," Rabinovici said.

The early findings don't prove PETs affect health outcomes.

But the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services helped plan the research and insisted on this mid-point check to be sure the study should continue, said Maria Carrillo, the Alzheimer's Association's chief medical officer. Researchers also will compare the 18,000 study participants with Medicare records of similar patients who didn't get PET scans, seeking final evidence of benefit.

"To get that right diagnosis, that's really important," said Cynthia Guzman of Napa, California, whose initial Alzheimer's diagnosis was ruled out in an earlier PET scan study.

Guzman had unusual fluctuating memory problems. Some days she functioned normally. Others, she'd stop her car at a stop sign without knowing how she got there or where she was going. Eventually, tremors and hallucinations led specialists to conclude she has Lewy body dementia. Knowing, Guzman said, has

allowed her to avoid a list of common medications that could worsen her symptoms.

While any treatment changes today may be modest, researchers are hunting drugs that eventually might at least slow Alzheimer's rather than just treat symptoms, more impetus for a precise diagnosis.

"We all hope for a day when this will be critically important," said Dr. Richard Hodes, director of the National Institute on Aging, who wasn't involved with the IDEAS study.

For now, in addition to people who qualify for the IDEAS study, the Alzheimer's Association and Society of Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging say:

—Unusually young dementia patients, younger than 65, also might be candidates for a PET scan.

—The scans shouldn't be used as a screening tool for people without symptoms or who worry they're at risk.

—Nor are they for people who can be diagnosed by standard means, or to determine disease severity.

10 Things to Know for Today

By The Associated Press

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

1. HOW MANY AMERICANS FEEL ABOUT 'OBAMACARE'

After months of uncertainty, there is a sense of dread in Trump's push to repeal the federal health care plan without replacing it.

2. TRUMP HAD SECOND CONVERSATION WITH PUTIN IN GERMANY

The U.S. president had another, previously undisclosed nearly hour-long discussion with the Russian leader at a G-20 summit dinner earlier this month in Hamburg.

3. FINAL MOMENTS OF JUSTINE DAMOND'S LIFE RECOUNTED

The partner of a Minneapolis police officer who shot and killed an Australian woman who had called 911 says he was startled by a loud sound near their squad car seconds before his partner fired his weapon.

4. VENGEANCE FUELS EXTRAJUDICIAL KILLINGS OF ISLAMIC STATE MILITANTS

In a personal quest to avenge his father's death, one Iraqi lieutenant in Mosul tells AP he has shot to death detained militants after questioning them.

5. EXPERTS WEIGH IN ON UKRAINE CYBERATTACK

The malware attack that ripped through the Eastern European country last month, disrupting health services, came close to violating international law, they say.

6. WHY BRAIN SCANS ARE NOT A BAD IDEA

New research suggests tests to diagnose Alzheimer's may lead to changes in treatment for patients whose memory problems are hard to pin down.

7. WHO SOUGHT HELP IN ENDING SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES CRISIS

The leader of the country's largest Muslim rebel group says IS-linked militants wanted his group to broker their possible withdrawal from Marawi, an overture he refused because Duterte will not talk to terrorists.

8. CONFLICT RETURNING TO CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

More than 300 people have been killed and 100,000 displaced in the southeastern town of Bangassou since May.

9. AUCTION OF MADONNA'S UNDERWEAR, LETTER FROM TUPAC HALTED

A judge stops the bidding for the pop star's personal items, including a love note from the late rapper, a pair of previously worn panties and a hairbrush containing her hair.

10. VERMONT GOVERNOR DOUBLES AS RACE CAR DRIVER

Republican Phil Scott says that when he took office he brought with him lessons of teamwork and competitiveness he learned as a winning driver at the track.

Health plan's fall brings dread for 'Obamacare' recipients

By JAMES ANDERSON and CARLA K. JOHNSON, Associated Press

DENVER (AP) — One American was able to afford her toddler's latest heart operation. Another had the

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means to go back to college to pursue her dreams.

They and thousands of others were able to do so as beneficiaries of President Barack Obama's Affordable Care Act. And while Republicans in Congress failed this week to craft a new health care plan, they did succeed in shaking the confidence of those who rely on the act the most. President Donald Trump's "Let Obamacare fail" remark Tuesday did nothing to assuage their fears.

Here's a snapshot of their concerns from around the country:

'THE WIND KNOCKED OUT OF ME'

Alison Chandra sobbed with relief Monday night when she heard that the Republican health care plan appeared doomed.

It meant she could still afford medical bills for her 3-year-old son, Ethan, who suffers from heterotaxy syndrome — a rare genetic disorder that causes organs to form incorrectly or in the wrong place.

But Chandra's anxiety swept back when she heard about the GOP effort to repeal the health plan with no replacement.

"That felt like getting the wind knocked out of me," said Chandra, a resident of Middlesex, New Jersey.

Chandra's story drew attention in June when she shared a photo of one of Ethan's hospital bills on Twitter. It showed a list of charges topping \$230,000 for her son's latest heart operation at Boston Children's Hospital. At the bottom, it listed what she owed after insurance payments: \$500.

Repeal, Chandra said, "just doesn't work for families with medically fragile children like ours."

'SAVED MY LIFE AND SANITY'

Dawn Erin went to her first round of physical therapy Tuesday to treat painful bladder infections she's suffered for two decades. Her copay was \$20 and her health plan covers the rest.

Physical therapy might seem mundane for some, but the 46-year-old from Austin, Texas, was ecstatic. As a self-employed massage therapist with hepatitis C, her pre-existing condition made it impossible for her to afford insurance before the Affordable Care Act.

"This is care I have needed all my adult life, but insurance didn't cover it and I couldn't afford to pay out of pocket," said Erin, a Democrat who voted for Hillary Clinton in November.

Erin relies on a government subsidy to help pay for her plan. She also was able to get expensive medication to cure her hepatitis C.

"I really wish some GOP senator would call me and explain to me how the (Affordable Care Act) is failing because this insurance reform has saved my life and sanity," she said.

'A REALLY HORRIFYING LOTTERY'

Alexandra Flores, 29, a library assistant at the University of South Florida in St. Petersburg, was astonished with Trump's "Let Obamacare fail" declaration and his further insistence that "I'm not going to own it."

"To say that he 'won't own it' now when his party owns the House, Senate and White House is preposterous," Flores said. "The president of the United States should not be treating health care this way."

Flores is pursuing a master's degree in library science. She credits the Affordable Care Act for her decision to go back to school rather than be locked into her previous office job. She pays \$77 a month for her health plan. The government kicks in about \$100.

"Trump is acting like those who currently benefit from the ACA are wrong and will be punished for the simple act of having health insurance," Flores said, adding that she feels he's using her health care coverage "as a bargaining chip."

"I'm not sure there is a way to plan" for the future, she said. "It's like we're playing a really horrifying lottery."

'GIVING UP MY NASHVILLE DREAMS'

Nashville-based Rachel Potter is thinking about giving up her dream as a professional singer and mov-

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ing to Florida to take a corporate job or someplace else with insurance. She's toured the country in the Broadway musical "Wicked" and with her own country music band.

Being self-employed, she said Tuesday, is "too uncertain" when it comes to the future of American health care.

Potter was covered under the Affordable Care Act when she unexpectedly became pregnant last year and had bleeding and other complications. Her medical bills were more than \$40,000, but she paid about \$2,000.

"Now that I have a child I'm considering seriously moving back to Florida and giving up my Nashville dreams to work for a corporation," said Potter. "That way I can at least be certain my child and I will have coverage."

'A LOT MORE DAY-TO-DAY STRESS'

Jake Martinez, 32, of the Salt Lake City suburb of Murray, Utah, is a social work student who also works two part-time jobs. He takes medication for his epilepsy that can cost hundreds of dollars a month. The Affordable Care Act, he said, made it possible to get affordable coverage for himself, his wife and their three children. Without it, he may decide to drop out of college so he can afford insurance.

"If I can't treat my epilepsy, I can't drive, I can't go to work. Things that are day-to-day activities become health hazards," Martinez said.

He and his wife, who owns a home day care business, have been trying to create a bare-bones budget they could live under if they can no longer buy health care on exchanges with help from subsidies. It's not easy, he said.

"We live now a life of a lot more day-to-day stress," Martinez said.

Associated Press Medical Writer Johnson reported from Chicago. AP writers Kelli Kennedy in Fort Lauderdale, Florida; Collin Binkley in Boston; Holly Ramer in Concord, New Hampshire; Lindsey Whitehurst in Salt Lake City and Margery Beck in Omaha, Nebraska, also contributed to this report.

Trump making last-ditch effort after health bill collapse

By ERICA WERNER and ALAN FRAM, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump says it's probably time to "just let Obamacare fail" after the latest humiliating health bill collapse in the Senate. Still, he's making a last-ditch effort to find some way to revive his party's seemingly failed efforts on the bill.

Trump stayed largely on the sidelines as Majority Leader Mitch McConnell struggled unsuccessfully to round up support to make good on the GOP's years of promises to repeal and replace former President Barack Obama's health care law. But with McConnell's third and final effort — on a repeal-only bill — looking like it, too, had collapsed, Trump urged McConnell to delay a make-or-break vote until early next week.

And the president invited all GOP senators to the White House for lunch Wednesday to discuss a path forward.

Trump pulled a similar move in June after McConnell fell short on his first health care effort, and it yielded no apparent results. Indeed Trump seated himself between two GOP senators — Susan Collins of Maine and Lisa Murkowski of Alaska — who announced Tuesday they would oppose McConnell's efforts to move forward with the latest bill.

Along with opposition from a third GOP senator, Shelley Moore Capito of West Virginia, that was enough to kill the legislation. McConnell can lose only two votes and still move forward in the closely divided Senate.

It looked like after seven years of campaigning on the issue, Republicans had discovered once in power that their own divisions would prevent them from delivering. McConnell was ready to hold the showdown vote Wednesday, to get senators on record on the issue and move on to other priorities like overhauling the tax code. But in a closed-door GOP lunch, fellow Republican senators urged him to wait, according to Republicans present who demanded anonymity to discuss the private issue. McConnell announced late

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Tuesday that the vote would occur early next week, "at the request of the president and vice president and after consulting with our members."

Yet with Murkowski, Collins and Capito already on record as "no" votes, and others harboring private reservations, it's not clear what can change over the next several days. Trump himself earlier Tuesday sounded ready to move to other issues.

"I think we're probably in that position where we'll just let Obamacare fail," the president said. "We're not going to own it. I'm not going to own it. I can tell you that the Republicans are not going to own it. We'll let Obamacare fail and then the Democrats are going to come to us and they're going to say, 'How do we fix it?'"

Despite the current law's problems, most health care experts do not believe it is at immediate risk of outright failure, and Democratic cooperation to adjust the law is far from assured.

Nor does it appear likely that Republicans can escape owning the problems with the law and the health care system overall, now that they control the House, Senate and White House, partly on the strength of campaigning against the law.

"They seem to have this notion that they can be a majority party, and have control of the White House, and not be responsible for bringing down the health care system," said Democratic Sen. Dick Durbin of Illinois. "It doesn't work that way."

McConnell had been hunting for votes to open debate on a revived version of legislation Congress sent to Obama's desk in 2015 that would have repealed major portions of Obamacare, with a two-year delay built in. Many Republicans support the repeal-only approach, and they questioned how senators who voted for the legislation two years ago could oppose it now.

But for others, the implications were too severe now that the bill could actually become law with a Republican president in the White House ready to sign it. The Congressional Budget Office has estimated that more than 30 million people would lose insurance over a decade under the legislation.

Collins voted against the legislation in 2015 while Murkowski and Capito both supported it. Murkowski told reporters that repealing the Affordable Care Act without the promise of a replacement would cause uncertainty and chaos.

"To just say repeal and 'Trust us, we're going to fix it in a couple of years,' that's not going to provide comfort to the anxiety that a lot of Alaskan families are feeling right now," she said.

What's next? Go back to the committee room and work on a bipartisan basis "in a way that the public feels that we are really working toward their best interests," Murkowski said.

Indeed Sen. Lamar Alexander of Tennessee, chairman of a Senate health panel, subsequently announced he planned hearings on the issue in the next few weeks, a step Senate Republicans have not taken to date.

The GOP's struggles over the latest measures came down to differences between moderates who feared the implications of a full-blown repeal, and conservatives who wanted nothing less. Speaker Paul Ryan managed to bridge those divides in the House in May, barely passing a bill that would have eliminated the coverage mandates and tax hikes in the Affordable Care Act, while unwinding the Medicaid expansion and removing insurance coverage for millions.

But the GOP bills polled poorly, and Trump never tried to sell them to the country. Meanwhile, Obama's law grew steadily more popular, and Republicans learned anew that a benefit, once given, is hard to take away.

Associated Press writers Stephen Ohlemacher, Richard Lardner and Mary Clare Jalonick contributed to this report.

Trump pulls out props for latest 'theme week'

By CATHERINE LUCEY, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's is pulling out all the stops — and props — to try to shift the subject to more positive messages.

Trump posed in a fire truck, waved a custom baseball bat and donned a white Stetson at the kickoff of a weeklong focus on American-produced goods. But the painstakingly arranged "Made in America" theme was almost immediately drowned out by news of the imploding health care legislation in the Senate.

It's not the first time Trump's team has adopted a weekly theme in hopes of managing its message and shifting attention away from the ongoing Russia investigation and the struggles to repeal the Obama health care law.

But while this week has offered the White House's most creative use of visual aids, it may be headed for the same fate as past themed efforts, which often couldn't compete with a rapid-fire news cycle and Trump's own talents for distraction.

"This White House has two things going against it," said Republican consultant Alex Conant, who worked on Sen. Marco Rubio's presidential bid. "One is they're trying to talk about theme weeks in the middle of a very crowded news cycle. And two it would appear not everyone got the memo on what the theme is going to be."

True to form, Trump himself strayed from the message even before the first "Made in America" event on Monday, defending his son Donald Trump Jr. on Twitter amid questions about a meeting Trump's eldest son had with a Russian lawyer during last year's presidential campaign.

On Tuesday, Trump dove into the health care debate, proclaiming himself "disappointed" with the stalled repeal effort in the Senate and insisting that he may "let Obamacare fail."

White House spokesman Sean Spicer called "Made in America" week a success, saying that the administration had received strong response in local media and online. He also said that the White House can focus on a theme while still working on issues such as health care, noting that "we can walk and chew gum."

"We have a great story to tell on Made in America. We'll continue that theme all week long," Spicer said. He said the suggestion that past theme weeks had struggled was "unbelievably false," adding that "it shows what a bubble some of the Washington reporters live in."

Past theme weeks have included policy speeches and big-name roundtables.

For "infrastructure week," Trump visited Ohio to pitch his plans for upgrading deteriorating bridges and roads. But the effort competed for attention with fired FBI Director James Comey's congressional testimony, as well as Trump's tweets about the London mayor and his travel ban.

During "technology week," the White House welcomed top CEOs — including Jeff Cook of Apple and Jeff Bezos of Amazon— for a brainstorming session. Trump later traveled to Iowa to tour a community college, and followed that up with a raucous campaign rally.

In "energy week," Trump touted a "golden era of American energy" during a speech. But his decision to target cable talk show host Mika Brzezinski on Twitter diverted attention, as did the unsuccessful push for a Senate vote on health-care legislation.

Trump embraced the "Made in America" theme at a kickoff event Monday that featured products from all 50 states displayed inside and outside the White House. Speaking to assembled business owners and executives, he promised that "restoring American manufacturing will not only restore our wealth, it will restore our pride and pride in ourselves."

Continuing the theme, Trump was to play host at a "Made in America" round table at the White House Wednesday and attend the commissioning of the aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford on Saturday.

Sen. Chris Coons, a Delaware Democrat, said in a statement that he was "encouraged that the White House is talking about manufacturing this week." But he added: "if we really want to support and grow American manufacturing we need more than theme weeks and slogans; we need new ideas, new policies, and real leadership from the White House."

Focusing on a specific theme is not a new communications tactic, and it sometimes can be a valuable

approach.

"In the Bush administration we had theme weeks pretty regularly, normally tied around an ongoing legislative push or trying to bring attention to an issue we felt wasn't being talked about enough," said Conant. "It's a very good exercise to get everyone on the same page talking about the same thing."

But there are limits to what they can accomplish.

"They take a lot of staff work and they rarely move the needle," said Bill Galston, a former Clinton administration domestic policy adviser now at the Brookings Institution.

More themed weeks are coming soon: The White House said "American Heroes" and "American Dreams" are up next.

Trump had second conversation with Putin in Germany

By VIVIAN SALAMA and JILL COLVIN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump had another, previously undisclosed conversation with Russian President Vladimir Putin at a summit in Germany this month.

White House spokesman Sean Spicer and National Security Council spokesman Michael Anton confirmed that Trump and Putin spoke at a dinner for world leaders and their spouses at the Group of 20 summit in Hamburg, Germany.

The conversation came hours after Trump and Putin's first official face-to-face meeting on July 7, which was originally scheduled to last just half an hour but stretched on for more than two. The two world leaders were also captured on video shaking hands and exchanging a few words after they arrived at the G-20 summit of industrialized and developing nations earlier that day.

Anton would not specify the duration of the conversation. But he said the discussion was casual and should not be characterized as a "meeting" or even a less formal, but official, "pull-aside."

"A conversation over dessert should not be characterized as a meeting," he said.

The dinner, hosted by German Chancellor Angela Merkel, was open only to world leaders and their spouses, as well as one translator per couple, according to a senior White House official who described the event on condition of anonymity despite the president's criticism of unnamed sources.

The official stressed that Trump spoke with many leaders over the course of the dinner and said he spoke briefly with Putin, who was seated next to first lady Melania Trump, as the event was concluding. Trump spoke with Putin using Russia's translator, since the American translator did not speak Russian.

But Ian Bremmer, who said he spoke with two people who attended the dinner, said that Trump and Putin spoke for nearly an hour while sitting among the other world leaders and their spouses at the dinner. Bremmer is a foreign affairs columnist and the president of the Eurasia Group, a consulting firm.

Attendees described the meeting as startling, said Bremmer, who was told Trump was very animated as he spoke with Putin, often using his hands to gesture.

Trump defended the dinner in a pair of angry tweets late Tuesday that noted the dinner had been on his public schedule.

"Fake News story of secret dinner with Putin is 'sick.' All G 20 leaders, and spouses, were invited by the Chancellor of Germany. Press knew!" he wrote.

A few minutes later he added: "The Fake News is becoming more and more dishonest! Even a dinner arranged for top 20 leaders in Germany is made to look sinister!"

Trump and Putin's relationship has been under scrutiny since the election campaign, when Trump repeatedly praised Putin as a strong leader and publicly encouraged him to hack then-rival Hillary Clinton's emails. Trump aides have since said he was joking.

U.S. intelligence officials have concluded that the Russian government meddled in the 2016 election in order to help Trump. Trump has repeatedly cast doubt on their findings and dismissed investigations into potential collusion between his campaign and Moscow as a "witch hunt."

Officer: Partner fired fatal shot moments after loud sound

By AMY FORLITI, Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — The partner of a Minneapolis police officer who shot and killed an Australian woman who had called 911 told investigators he was startled by a loud sound near their squad car seconds before his partner fired his weapon.

Officer Matthew Harrity's account, as given by state investigators, is the first to emerge of the moments leading up to the death of Justine Damond, a 40-year-old meditation teacher and life coach who was due to be married in August. It's also the only one, since Officer Mohamed Noor — who fired the shot that killed Damond — has so far refused to be interviewed.

Damond's death late Saturday night in an alley behind her southwest Minneapolis home sparked anger and a demand for answers both in the city and in her home country, where the shooting has been front-page news for days.

The Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension said Damond approached the driver's side window of the squad car immediately after Harrity said he had been startled by the sound. Noor, in the passenger seat, shot Damond through the open driver's side window, the BCA said.

Harrity was interviewed Tuesday. The BCA said Noor's attorney didn't say when or if Noor would talk to investigators, and under the law an interview can't be compelled.

Noor's attorney didn't respond to messages from The Associated Press.

Harrity and Noor are on paid administrative leave. Harrity has been with the Minneapolis police department for one year, and Noor has been with the department for nearly two.

According to the BCA, Harrity told investigators that he and Noor responded to a 911 call from Damond about a possible assault near her home at about 11:30 p.m. Saturday.

Harrity was driving the squad car as the officers went through an alley to look for a suspect. The squad lights were off when the noise startled him, Harrity said.

No weapon was found at the scene. The officers did not turn on their body cameras until after the shooting, and the squad car camera was also not activated.

Harrity told investigators that after the shooting, the officers got out of their vehicle and gave Damond immediate medical attention.

Harrity said that he and Noor saw a man, estimated to be between 18 and 25, bicycling in the area before the shooting. That man stopped and watched as officers attended to Damond. BCA agents are asking that man, and any other potential witnesses, to come forward.

The BCA said that unless more people come forward, there are no additional interviews scheduled.

David Klinger, a criminal justice professor at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, said police officers can't be compelled to testify in an outside investigation.

"Police officers are citizens ... they have the same Fifth Amendment right as anyone. They don't have to give a statement," Klinger said. "His lawyer might be saying, you're not going to talk until I feel you're rested and not under stress."

In a news conference after the BCA's update, Mayor Betsy Hodges said she wished Noor would speak to investigators.

"It's frustrating to have some of the picture but not all of it," she said. "We cannot compel Officer Noor to make a statement. I wish we could. I wish that he would make a statement."

Assistant Chief Medaria Arradondo said the department is reviewing its policy on body cameras and was doing so before Damond's death. Arradondo said the department is just eight months into a department-wide rollout, and the review includes focusing on how often officers activate them. He said the department wants to increase that frequency.

The city also said it planned to release a transcript of Damond's 911 call after it is shared with family members. Officials had initially declined to make it public.

The BCA said forensic testing is being completed and evidence is still being examined. When the investigation is done, the BCA will present all its findings to prosecutors for possible charges.

Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull gave an interview Wednesday to Australia's "Today" show, shortly before the release of details from the BCA's preliminary investigation, and joined the chorus demanding answers.

"How can a woman out in the street in her pajamas seeking assistance from police be shot like that? It is a shocking killing," Turnbull said.

In Damond's hometown of Sydney, about 300 people attended a silent vigil in her honor Wednesday morning at Freshwater Beach. Mourners threw pink flowers into the Pacific Ocean.

Records from the city's Office of Police Conduct Review show Noor has had three complaints against him. Two are pending, and the third was dismissed without discipline. Under state law, details of open cases and cases that result in no discipline are not released.

Noor was also sued earlier this year after a May 25 incident in which he and other officers took a woman to the hospital for an apparent mental health crisis. The lawsuit claims Noor and other officers violated the woman's rights when they entered her home without permission and Noor grabbed her wrist and upper arm. The lawsuit, which is pending, said Noor relaxed his grip when the woman said she had a previous shoulder injury.

Damond, who was planning to be married next month, was a meditation teacher and life coach. Her maiden name was Justine Ruszczuk, and though she was not yet married, she had already been using her fiance's last name.

Associated Press writers Jeff Baenen and Doug Glass contributed to this report.

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Saudi woman in miniskirt video arrested after public outcry

By AYA BATRAWY, Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — A Saudi woman has been arrested for defying the kingdom's strict dress code by walking around in a miniskirt and crop top in a video that sparked public outrage.

The woman, whose name was not given, was detained by police in the capital, Riyadh, for wearing "immodest clothes" that contradicted the country's conservative Islamic dress code, state media reported Tuesday. Police referred her case to the public prosecutor, according to the official Twitter account of state-run TV channel al-Ekhbariya.

In the video, which has gone viral since first emerging on Snapchat over the weekend, the woman is filmed walking around a historic fort in a miniskirt with no one else around. The short video, shot in a village in the desert region of Najd, where many of Saudi Arabia's most conservative tribes and families are from, is followed by other shots of her sitting in the desert.

The video sparked a Twitter hashtag that called for her arrest, with many saying she flagrantly disobeyed Saudi rules, which require all women living in the kingdom, including foreigners, to wear long, loose robes known as abayas in public. Most Saudi women also wear a headscarf and veil that covers the face.

Social media is wildly popular in Saudi Arabia as a space to vent frustrations and gauge public opinion. The outcry against the video and the woman's subsequent arrest reveal how powerful and widespread conservative views are in the kingdom, despite recent moves by Saudi Arabia to modernize and loosen some rules.

The country's 31-year-old heir to the throne, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, has pushed for greater openings for entertainment in part to appease the youth, who are active on social media and can bypass government censors online. More than half of Saudi Arabia's population is under 25.

The government announced last week that girls would be allowed for the first time to play sports in public school and have access to physical education classes. The powers of the kingdom's religious police

have also been curtailed, and they are officially no longer allowed to arrest people.

Despite these moves, strict gender segregation rules and other restrictions on women remain in place. Women are not allowed to drive in Saudi Arabia and cannot obtain a passport or travel abroad without a male relative's permission.

After the woman's video surfaced, some Saudis expressed alarm, saying that Twitter was being used as a tool to out other citizens.

Saudi writer Waheed al-Ghamdi wrote on Twitter that while the woman violated Saudi laws, her actions did not warrant such an outcry because they did not harm others.

"I am simply questioning the lack of priorities regarding anger and alarm expressed over human rights violations and oppression versus the harmless personal choices of others," he wrote.

Some of those defending her posted images from President Donald Trump's visit to Saudi Arabia in May, in which First Lady Melania Trump and his daughter Ivanka, though modestly dressed in higher necklines and longer sleeves, did not cover their heads or wear abayas.

One Twitter user, whose post was shared more than 1,700 times, superimposed an image of Ivanka's face on the young Saudi woman's body, writing: "Enough already, the situation has been solved."

The woman's image was blurred on Saudi news websites reporting on the case. It is common in Saudi Arabia to see heavily blurred or pixelated images of women's faces on billboards and storefronts — in stark contrast to the many towering images of senior male royals displayed across the country.

Follow Aya Batrawy on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/ayaelb>

AP Interview: Filipino rebel refuses to broker for militants

By JIM GOMEZ, Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines (AP) — The leader of the Philippines' largest Muslim rebel group says Islamic State-linked militants wanted his group to broker their possible withdrawal from Marawi city during the major military offensive against them but he refused to intervene.

Al Haj Murad Ebrahim of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front told The Associated Press in an interview late Tuesday that intervening would have been difficult because President Rodrigo Duterte has declared his government would not negotiate with terrorists.

The nearly two months of insurrection in Marawi is the worst he has seen in his more than four decades as a rebel in the country's south, Murad said, adding the attackers are now wracked by infighting and have expressed through religious emissaries they are ready to fight to the death.

The violence underscores the urgency for the government and the Moro rebel group to implement a 2014 Muslim autonomy deal to help stop the rising tide of extremism, he said.

More than 550 people, including 413 militants, have been killed in Marawi since May 23, when hundreds of gunmen, waving Islamic State group-style black flags, stormed into the city center, occupied commercial buildings and villages and took hostages. Duterte ordered troops to crush the attackers and declared martial law in the south for 60 days, which he now wants to extend up to the end of the year to deal with the worst crisis he has faced in his yearlong presidency.

Amid the intense fighting that has forced nearly 400,000 people to flee from their homes, Murad said his group met with the president and offered to help rescue hundreds of residents, who have been trapped and starving in their homes in the battle zones. Duterte welcomed the offer, he said, and the government and the rebels worked to establish "peace corridors" through which trapped residents were extricated to safety.

A group of Muslim ulamas, or religious scholars, managed to enter the conflict zone in past weeks and urged some of the militant leaders to end the siege and withdraw from the beleaguered city.

"After a series of dialogue, they came up with a proposal, they said, 'we will leave but the MILF should intervene,'" Murad said of the militants' demand that was relayed by the ulamas to his rebel group.

"I said it'll be hard for us to intervene because the president is very clear in his statements that he will

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not negotiate with the terrorists," Murad told AP, adding he asked the religious leaders to convince the gunmen "to just withdraw so this will stop" without any mediation.

The gunmen chose to fight it out, he said. "What they said, if nobody will intervene, then we will die here," Murad said.

After weeks of battle setbacks, the militants have grown desperate, he said. One of the leaders, Abdullah Maute, had a deadly rift with another militant. "What happened was, he was able to kill their member and he was wounded," Murad said, citing information his rebels received.

Maute's brother, Omarkhayyam, had also been wounded in battle and is no longer seen on the ground, he said.

Murad's remarks echo earlier military statements that Omarkhayyam Maute has been wounded early in the fighting and that the militants have been beset by infighting as the siege dragged on.

A militant leader, Isnilon Hapilon, "is no longer being seen but his whereabouts has not been confirmed," he said. Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana has said in recent weeks that Hapilon, among the most-wanted terror suspects by the United States, may still be in Marawi, hiding in a mosque.

Murad's rebel group has a vast encampment in Butig town, near Marawi, and hundreds of its fighters have been ordered to stay in a designated zone to prevent them from being entangled in the ongoing clashes. Ceasefire monitors from the government, the rebel group and foreign peacekeepers have been stationed in Butig to prevent any problem, he said.

Murad traveled to Manila to witness government and rebel representatives submitting to Duterte a new draft legislation that aims to establish a more powerful Muslim autonomous region in the south of the predominantly Roman Catholic nation.

The autonomy deal would have been a major legacy of Duterte's predecessor, Benigno Aquino III, but the legislation stalled in Congress in 2015 after some rebels from the 11,000-strong Moro Islamic Liberation Front became entangled in fighting that killed 44 police commandos during an anti-terrorism raid in the south. The massive police deaths sparked public outrage and prompted lawmakers to stall passage of the bill.

Wearing a business suit, the 69-year-old Murad, who says he met late al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden when he was sent as a young insurgent for combat training in Afghanistan decades ago, underscored that, if the autonomy deal was set in place, the more moderate rebels in his group can provide crucial help in dealing with the smaller but radical groups that have emerged in the south.

The deal aims to create a regional police force, which may enlist qualified insurgents, who fought and grew up in the battlefields in the south that may now be transformed into prosperous communities.

"The revolutionaries are very, very, very knowledgeable of the terrain," Murad said.

Trump to nominate Jon Huntsman as US ambassador to Russia

By KEN THOMAS, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump announced his intention Tuesday to nominate former Utah Gov. Jon Huntsman to be U.S. ambassador to Russia.

If confirmed, the former 2012 GOP presidential candidate would take over a high-profile post amid ongoing investigations into Russian meddling in the 2016 election and potential contacts between Russian officials and the Trump campaign.

Huntsman has twice served as an ambassador. He was the nation's top diplomat to Singapore under President George H.W. Bush and then served in that role in China under President Barack Obama before returning to the U.S. to run for president.

Huntsman was also briefly under consideration to be Trump's secretary of state.

Still, the White House misspelled Huntsman's first name in its press release announcing Trump's intention, calling him "Governor John Huntsman Jr. of Utah" instead of Jon.

The White House made the announcement shortly after it confirmed that Trump had a previously undisclosed conversation with Russian President Vladimir Putin during a dinner at the G-20 summit in Hamburg,

Germany, earlier this month.

Huntsman is the son of a billionaire industrialist whose company Huntsman International LLC currently has a handful of businesses in Russia, including plants that make pigments and polyurethanes, the Salt Lake Tribune has reported.

Huntsman Jr. played a role in the family's early business dealings in the country shortly after the fall of the Soviet Union, the paper has said.

The former governor, a Mormon, had an up-and-down relationship with Trump during last year's campaign. He was slow to endorse any candidate for the Republican nomination though he did back Trump once he became the presumptive nominee. But Huntsman then called for Trump to drop out after the October release of a 2005 video in which Trump was captured on a hot microphone making lewd comments about women.

Huntsman said then that the "campaign cycle has been nothing but a race to the bottom" and called for Trump's running mate, then-Indiana Gov. Mike Pence, to top the GOP ticket.

Trump also went after Huntsman during his tenure as ambassador to Beijing. In a series of tweets in 2011 and 2012, the celebrity businessman called Huntsman a "lightweight" and "weak" and claimed that China "did a major number on us" during his tenure.

But Huntsman and Trump buried their differences during Trump's transition.

Associated Press writer Michelle Price contributed to this story from Salt Lake City, Utah.

APNewsBreak: US restoring asset seizures _ with safeguards

By SADIE GURMAN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration will soon restore the ability of police to seize suspects' money and property with federal help, but The Associated Press has learned the policy will come with a series of new provisions aimed at preventing the types of abuse that led the Obama Justice Department to severely curtail the practice.

At issue is asset forfeiture, which has been criticized because it allows law enforcement to take possessions without criminal convictions or, in some cases, indictments. The policy to be rolled out Wednesday targets so-called adoptive forfeiture, which lets local authorities circumvent more-restrictive state laws to seize property under federal law. The proceeds are then shared with federal counterparts.

Former Attorney General Eric Holder significantly limited the practice in response to criticism that it was ripe for abuse, particularly with police seizures of small amounts of cash. Attorney General Jeff Sessions plans to ease those restrictions, but also impose new requirements on when federal law can be used, a senior Justice Department official briefed on the policy said Tuesday.

The official, who spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity, was not authorized to discuss the changes before their unveiling.

Key changes include requiring more detail from police agencies about probable cause justifying a seizure before federal authorities get involved. Also, the Justice Department will have to decide more quickly whether to take on local seizures and also let property owners know their rights and the status of their belongings within 45 days of the seizure, faster than federal law requires.

Another key change will make it harder for police to seize less than \$10,000 unless they have a state warrant, have made an arrest related to the seizure, have taken other contraband, such as drugs, along with the money, or the owner has confessed to a crime. Without at least one of those conditions, authorities will need a federal prosecutor's approval to seize it under federal law.

Old rules set that threshold at \$5,000, the official said. The old process rarely required a federal prosecutor's sign-off, said Stefan Cassella, a former federal prosecutor and expert on asset forfeiture and money laundering law.

Sessions' support for asset forfeiture is in keeping with his tough-on-crime agenda and aligns with his oft-stated view that the Justice Department's top priority should be helping local law enforcement fight

violent crime. Police departments use the seizures for expenses, and some agencies felt Holder's restrictions left them without a critical funding source. When he forecast the rollback of the Holder provision at a conference of district attorneys, the announcement drew applause.

But an embrace of asset forfeiture follows bipartisan efforts to overhaul the practice, and as a growing number of states have made their own laws limiting its use.

Republican Rep. Darrell Issa of California, who sponsored legislation this year to tightly regulate asset forfeiture, told the AP that Sessions' move is "a troubling step backward" that would "bring back a loophole that's become one of the most flagrantly abused provisions of this policy."

"I'm glad that at least some safeguards will be put in place, but their plan to expand civil forfeiture is, really, just as concerning as it was before," Issa said. "Criminals shouldn't be able to keep the proceeds of their crime, but innocent Americans shouldn't lose their right to due process, or their private property rights, in order to make that happen."

As of 2014, more than 20 states set restrictions either by requiring a criminal conviction, increasing the government's burden of proof that property is linked to a crime, or other measures, said Darpana M. Sheth, an attorney at Institute for Justice, which represents defendants in forfeiture cases across the country. Requiring authorities to secure a criminal conviction before they can forfeit property is the only real safeguard against abuse, she said.

"The stories of people having small amounts of cash seized are more infuriating and puzzling to the public and seem to represent some greater injustice," said David Harris, a University of Pittsburgh law professor who studies the topic. Sessions' changes will likely discourage small seizures or at least better document them, he said. But the broader, more pressing problems with asset forfeiture remain because police departments are still too reliant on taking private property as a way to foot their bills, he said.

Up to 80 percent of the proceeds from a seizure can be shared with local agencies under the Justice Department's adoptive forfeiture program. More than \$6 billion in forfeited funds has been shared with state and local law enforcement since fiscal year 2000, according to a scathing report in March from the department's inspector general. It found weaknesses throughout the asset forfeiture program, including poor data collection and analysis, and inadequate training of local and state officers.

The new policy mandates more training for local officers whose departments engage in the program, the official said.

Cassella said Holder's restrictions aimed to reserve scarce federal resources for sprawling, complex investigations where the ability to seize assets is critical. But he called it a "blunt instrument" that limited cooperation with state agencies. Sessions' safeguards could go further, he said, but are "a step in the right direction."

Lawyer: Russian developer's staffer also at Trump Tower meet

By STEPHEN BRAUN and JULIE PACE, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Revelations that a Russian developer's representative was the eighth attendee at a Trump Tower campaign meeting arranged by President Donald Trump's eldest son prompted a new round of castigation on Tuesday from Democrats. It also brought word that the special counsel investigating possible Trump campaign ties to Russia wants more information about the sit-down.

Officials from the office of special counsel Robert Mueller reached out over the weekend to a lawyer for Ike Kaveladze, who also goes by the name Irakly Kaveladze, attorney Scott Balber told The Associated Press. Kaveladze works for a Russian developer who once partnered with Trump to bring the Miss Universe pageant to Moscow,

Balber's comments are the first public indication that Mueller is probing the June 2016 gathering in Trump's namesake New York City skyscraper.

In emails, Trump Jr. enthusiastically agreed to the meeting with Russian lawyer Natalia Veselnitskaya and others after he was promised dirt on his father's rival, Democrat Hillary Clinton. He has since denied such material ever materialized.

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Kaveladze works for Emin and Aras Agalarov and was there to represent them, according to Balber, who is serving as legal counsel for both Kavaladze and the Agalarovs. The father and son, who worked with Trump on the pageant in 2013, were named in the emails that promised damaging information on Clinton.

Balber cast Kaveladze as a minor player in the meeting, saying he had "no idea what the subject of the meeting was until an hour before" and doesn't remember saying anything other than his name during the discussion. Balber said Kaveladze believed he was attending the meeting to translate for Veselnitskaya, but the attorney brought her own interpreter.

Veselnitskaya said the meeting focused on U.S.-Russian adoption policies and a sanctions law. She has denied working for the Russian government.

Democratic lawmakers skeptical of that account repeated their concerns on Tuesday.

Virginia Sen. Mark Warner, the top Democrat on the Senate Intelligence Committee, said his panel wanted to talk to the meeting's attendees.

"I doubt if this individual who had a history of setting up thousands of fake accounts in Delaware was really there to talk about Russian adoptions," Warner said.

Warner appeared to be referring to a 2000 New York Times story that identified Kaveladze as running a company cited in a Government Accountability Office report for laundering \$1.4 billion in wealthy foreigners' funds via U.S. banks using thousands of Delaware corporations.

Former Michigan Sen. Carl Levin, who ordered the GAO report, called Kaveladze the "poster child" of using hidden ownership of American shell corporations to launder money.

Balber disputed that characterization, noting that no criminal charges were filed in the case.

The meeting was also attended by Trump son-in-law Jared Kushner, then-campaign chairman Paul Manafort, music publicist Rob Goldstone and Rinat Akhmetshin, a prominent Russian-American lobbyist and former Soviet military officer. Trump Jr. scheduled the gathering after Goldstone, a British publicist for Emin Agalarov, said the elder Agalarov had met with a Russian prosecutor who offered to provide the campaign with damaging information about Clinton.

Balber denied such a meeting ever took place and said he didn't know why Goldstone made the assertion. He said Goldstone stopped working for Emin Agalarov in January for reasons unrelated to last year's meeting.

In an online profile, Kaveladze lists himself as a vice president of Russia-based Crocus Group, Aras Agalarov's firm, and says in a separate LinkedIn profile that he handled tax preparation for the company.

He holds a master's degree in business administration from the University of New Haven in Connecticut, according to those profiles. His most recent U.S. address appears to be in Huntington Beach, California, although several websites he maintains say he is based in Moscow. He didn't respond to multiple attempts to reach him through his online sites.

Kaveladze was named a vice president of the Crocus Group in 2004. He lists among his achievements the development of Russia's Far Eastern Federal University, a cluster of more than 70 college buildings near Vladivostok that Agalarov built, according to websites that contain profiles of him. In 2012, Russian President Vladimir Putin opened the facility and, a year later, gave Agalarov a national "Order of Honor."

The Times reported in 2000 that Kaveladze was born in the Soviet Republic of Georgia in 1960 and graduated from the Moscow Finance Academy — a degree that Ike Kaveladze also reports on his LinkedIn and internet pages. The newspaper reported he operated a firm called International Business Creations, which the GAO report said opened the bank accounts based on the Delaware shell companies.

Also Tuesday, the top Democrat on the Senate Judiciary Committee, California Sen. Dianne Feinstein, said Mueller had approved Manafort and others to testify before the panel, though it was unclear if Manafort would agree to talk.

A person familiar with the discussions, who spoke on condition of anonymity because the person was not authorized to publicly discuss the ongoing investigations, said Manafort hasn't committed to appearing next week and hasn't decided which committees he'll meet with.

Associated Press writers Mary Clare Jalonick and Jeff Horwitz in Washington, Desmond Butler in Balti-

more, and Jake Pearson in New York contributed to this report.

Australians see woman's shooting by police as US nightmare

By KRISTEN GELINEAU, Associated Press

SYDNEY (AP) — Half a world from where an Australian woman was shot dead by a Minneapolis police officer, a front-page headline in her hometown Sydney newspaper summarized Australia's reaction in blunt terms: "AMERICAN NIGHTMARE."

In Justine Damond's native country, news of the meditation teacher's baffling death has dominated the airwaves, newspapers and websites for days, feeding into Australians' long-held fears about America's notorious culture of gun violence.

"The country is infested with possibly more guns than people," said Philip Alpers, a gun policy analyst with the University of Sydney who has studied the stark differences in gun laws between the nations. "We see America as a very risky place in terms of gun violence — and so does the rest of the world."

While police officers carry guns in Australia, deadly shootings by police are exceedingly rare; there are only a handful reported each year, according to the Australian Institute of Criminology. And though the U.S. doesn't keep a national database of deadly police-involved shootings, even incomplete statistics show there are hundreds every year.

America's reluctance to strengthen its gun regulations and its seemingly endless stream of shooting deaths have long been a source of confusion and concern in Australia, which instituted tough gun ownership laws in 1996 following a deadly mass shooting. At the time, then-Prime Minister John Howard — a conservative — warned Australians against following America's lead on gun control, saying: "We have an opportunity in this country not to go down the American path."

The Australian government's official travel advice to those heading to the U.S. specifically warns tourists to be on guard for gun crime, and urges Australians living in the U.S. to be familiar with "active shooter" training drills. Australian media coverage of America's frequent mass shootings is often tinged with disbelief — "another day, another shooting in America" is a common refrain on newscasts.

The death of Damond, a 40-year-old meditation teacher who was reportedly dressed in her pajamas when she was shot by a police officer late Saturday, has sparked a similarly stunned reaction. The story has led network newscasts and was splashed across newspapers' front pages. Sydney's Daily Telegraph ran an editorial headlined "A senseless and tragic death."

The shooting occurred after Damond called police to report what she believed to be an active sexual assault in an alley near her home.

"We thought yesterday was our worst nightmare, but we awoke to the ugly truth and it hurt even more," Damond's father, John Ruszczyk, told reporters on Tuesday. "Justine was a beacon to all of us. We only ask that the light of justice shine down on the circumstances of her death."

On Wednesday, the family and nearly 300 friends of Damond gathered on a Sydney beach for a silent vigil. Dozens carried candles in the early morning light on Freshwater Beach and each mourner tossed a single pink blossom into the Pacific Ocean, in honor of Damond's favorite color.

"We're here to come together as a community around our beautiful Justine to honor her life, share our love and mourn her death," the family said in a statement.

Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull on Wednesday demanded answers in Damond's death, saying something "clearly went tragically wrong."

"How can a woman out in the street in her pajamas seeking assistance from police be shot like that? It is a shocking killing," Turnbull said in an interview with Australia's "Today Show." "We are demanding answers on behalf of her family. And our hearts go out to her family and all of her friends and loved ones. It's a truly tragic, tragic killing there in Minneapolis."

Trump lets Iran deal live, but signals he may not for long

By JOSH LEDERMAN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump was eager to declare Iran in breach of the nuclear deal but was talked out of it by national security aides who rushed to the Oval Office to persuade him as a midnight deadline approached, administration officials say.

Trump agreed let the issue go, but only for a few more months — and only after last-minute changes to distance Trump further from the deal.

Rather than say, as planned, that Iran was living up to its end of the deal, Trump's aides found a way late Monday to let the deal continue for now without technically confirming that Iran is complying. The administration followed up the announcement with new, non-nuclear sanctions on Iranians on Tuesday to show Trump is indeed serious about confronting Tehran.

The compromise, relayed to Congress in the final few hours before the deadline, lets Iran continue enjoying relief — for now — from nuclear sanctions lifted as part of the 2015 deal. It also gives Trump some cover to declare publicly that Iran is violating "the spirit" of the deal, preserving a potent argument should he ultimately decide to exit the pact.

The deadline comes up again in three months. Given Trump's strong reluctance to certify Iran's compliance, it's highly unlikely he will agree to do it again, officials and others familiar with Trump's Iran policy said. The individuals weren't authorized to comment publicly and requested anonymity.

Coupled with the new sanctions, the move raised optimism among critics of the deal that Trump's broader Iran review, expected to conclude in the next few weeks, will mark a major shift in the U.S. approach to the Islamic Republic.

"What that really foreshadows is once the policy review is done, we're going to see a massive increase in pressure — not just sanctions pressure but using all instruments of American power," said Mark Dubowitz, who runs the hawkish Foundation for Defense of Democracies and has advised the administration on Iran.

The drama came to a head Monday when Trump abruptly put the certification on hold, even as his administration had already started announcing it.

Top advisers scurried to the White House, with Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, Defense Secretary Jim Mattis and national security adviser H.R. McMaster urging Trump to preserve the status quo — at least until the Iran review is completed and a new U.S. policy ready to be unveiled. Steve Bannon, Trump's chief strategist and an avowed critic of the deal, and CIA Director Mike Pompeo urged Trump to change course and say Iran wasn't complying, several individuals briefed on the meeting said.

The argument that ultimately won out: Letting Iran keeps its sanctions relief — thus fulfilling U.S. obligations under the deal — without using the word "complying." Trump and other critics have pointed to minor infractions by Tehran to say it's in violation of restrictions on its nuclear development, although the International Atomic Energy Agency that monitors the deal says Iran is broadly complying.

The compromise led to a last-minute shift in the language Trump's administration employed to describe its actions on the Iran deal.

In an original version of a public statement, prepared by the administration in advance of Monday's announcement and obtained by The Associated Press, the State Department planned to say the U.S. "is certifying Iran's continued compliance with the JCPOA" — an acronym for the nuclear deal — "while noting Iran's continued malign activities outside the nuclear issue."

In the final language sent to Congress and echoed later by the State Department, the administration said only that it was certifying that "the conditions ... are met" when it comes to a separate, U.S. law put in place to monitor the nuclear deal.

In practice, the compromise accomplishes the same as what Trump's earlier, April certification did: Iran continues to receive relief from nuclear sanctions in exchange for rolling back its nuclear program. But the shift in rhetoric helps bolster Trump's position that Iran is defying a deal that's bad to begin with and must be corrected.

"The administration is continuing to conduct a full review of U.S. policy toward Iran," said State Depart-

ment spokeswoman Heather Nauert. "During the course of this review, the United States will continue to aggressively counter Iran's malign activities in the region."

The latest attempt to clamp down on Iran's military financing, the new sanctions hit 18 Iranian individuals and groups. They range from an Iranian-based company accused of aiding the country's drone program to a Turkey-based provider of naval equipment and a China-based network that helped secure electronics for Tehran.

Iran has bristled at new U.S. sanctions, arguing that they, too, violate the spirit of the deal. On Tuesday, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said Trump's administration was trying to "poison the international atmosphere" with the sanctions, which Zarif deemed illegal.

"This unfortunately has become a bad habit for this administration," Zarif said.

The Iran deal, reached by former President Barack Obama and other world leaders, doesn't address global concerns about non-nuclear activities, but also doesn't prevent the U.S. and others from punishing Iran for those activities.

"This administration will continue to aggressively target Iran's malign activity, including their ongoing state support of terrorism, ballistic missile program, and human rights abuses," said Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin.

AP Diplomatic Writer Matthew Lee in Washington and AP writer Edith M. Lederer at the United Nations contributed to this report.

Follow Josh Lederman on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/joshledermanAP>

'Let Obamacare fail,' Trump declares as GOP plan collapses

By ERICA WERNER and ALAN FRAM, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump declared Tuesday it's time to "let Obamacare fail" after the latest GOP health care plan crashed and burned in the Senate, a stunning failure for the president, Republican leader Mitch McConnell and a party that has vowed for years to abolish the law.

In a head-spinning series of developments, rank-and-file Republican senators turned on McConnell and Trump for the third time in a row, denying the votes to move forward with a plan for a straight-up repeal of "Obamacare." This time, it was three GOP women — Susan Collins of Maine, Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, and Shelley Moore Capito of West Virginia — who delivered the death blow.

All had been shut out of McConnell's initial all-male working group on health care.

McConnell, who could afford to lose only two votes in the narrowly divided Senate, had turned to the repeal-only bill after his earlier repeal-and-replace measure was rejected on Monday. That had followed the failure of an earlier version of the bill last month.

The successive defeats made clear that despite seven years of promises to repeal former President Barack Obama's Affordable Care Act, Republicans apparently cannot deliver. Nonetheless, McConnell insisted he would move forward with a vote on his measure to repeal the law, effective in two years, with a promise to work — along with Democrats — to replace it in the meantime.

The vote to move ahead to the bill will take place early next week, McConnell announced late Tuesday. It appears doomed to fail, but GOP leaders want to put lawmakers on record on the issue and move on.

At the White House, Trump appeared to recognize defeat, at least for the moment, while insisting he bore none of the blame.

"I think we're probably in that position where we'll just let Obamacare fail," the president said. "We're not going to own it. I'm not going to own it. I can tell you that the Republicans are not going to own it. We'll let Obamacare fail and then the Democrats are going to come to us and they're going to say, 'How do we fix it?'"

White House press secretary Sean Spicer said Tuesday night that all GOP senators have been invited to

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the White House tomorrow for lunch to discuss the way forward on health care.

Despite the current law's problems, most health care experts do not believe it is at immediate risk of outright failure, and Democratic cooperation to adjust the law is far from assured.

Nor does it appear likely that Republicans can escape owning the problems with the law and the health care system overall, now that they control the House, Senate and White House, partly on the strength of campaigning against the law.

"They seem to have this notion that they can be a majority party, and have control of the White House, and not be responsible for bringing down the health care system," said Democratic Sen. Dick Durbin of Illinois. "It doesn't work that way."

Asked how he would justify the GOP's failure on health care to voters, McConnell responded: "Well, we have a new Supreme Court justice" — suggesting inaction on health care would be forgiven because of that success along with some regulatory roll-backs.

As the day began Tuesday, McConnell was hunting for votes to open debate on a revived version of legislation Congress sent to Obama's desk in 2015 that would have repealed major portions of Obamacare, with a two-year delay built in. He had turned to that approach after getting stunned Monday night by defections by Sens. Mike Lee of Utah and Jerry Moran of Kansas on a repeal-and-replace bill.

Many Republicans support the repeal-only approach, and they questioned how senators who voted for the legislation two years ago could oppose it now.

"We're going to find out if there's hypocrisy in the United States Senate in the next few days I'm afraid," said Sen. David Perdue, R-Georgia.

But for others, the implications were too severe now that the bill could actually become law with a Republican president in the White House ready to sign it. The Congressional Budget Office has estimated that more than 30 million people would lose insurance over a decade under the legislation.

Collins voted against the legislation in 2015 while Murkowski and Capito both supported it. Murkowski told reporters Tuesday that repealing the Affordable Care Act without the promise of a replacement would cause uncertainty and chaos.

"To just say repeal and 'Trust us, we're going to fix it in a couple of years,' that's not going to provide comfort to the anxiety that a lot of Alaskan families are feeling right now," she said.

Said Capito: "I did not come to Washington to hurt people."

What's next? Go back to the committee room and work on a bipartisan basis "in a way that the public feels that we are really working toward their best interests," Murkowski said. "It's where we should have started. ... And yes, this is hard."

Sure enough, later in the day health committee chairman Sen. Lamar Alexander of Tennessee announced he planned hearings on the issue in the next few weeks, a step Senate Republicans have not taken to date.

The GOP's struggles over the latest measures came down to differences between moderates who feared the implications of a full-blown repeal, and conservatives who wanted nothing less. Speaker Paul Ryan managed to bridge those divides in the House in May, barely passing a bill that would have eliminated the coverage mandates and tax hikes in the Affordable Care Act, while unwinding the Medicaid expansion and removing insurance coverage for millions.

But the GOP bills polled poorly, and Trump never tried to sell them to the country. Meanwhile, Obama's law grew steadily more popular in polls, and Republicans learned anew that a benefit, once given, is hard to take away.

Associated Press writers Stephen Ohlemacher, Richard Lardner and Mary Clare Jalonick contributed.

In Trump style, senators' tweet dashed GOP health care hopes

By MATTHEW DALY, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — When Sens. Mike Lee and Jerry Moran decided they were in ready to disrupt the GOP rewrite of the health care law, they chose President Donald Trump's favorite medium.

They could not support Senate Republicans' plan, the somewhat unlikely pair of conservatives tweeted at

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8:30 p.m. Monday night, giving no heads up to the White House or Senate leaders before pressing send. The story behind the statement reveals two senators willing to be branded as bill killers and seemingly unconcerned with trying to soften the blow with party leaders.

The announcement, coming after some 10 days of conversations between the men, stunned official Washington and left Majority Leader Mitch McConnell at least two votes short in the closely divided Senate from being able to move forward with the GOP bill, effectively sinking the measure. It landed shortly after Trump dined with a group of senators to discuss strategy - unwittingly plotting a plan that would immediately become outdated.

Sen. John Cornyn, the second-ranking Republican leader, found out about Lee's defection after the White House dinner of rosemary-grilled rib eye and summer vegetable succotash. He "had no idea it was coming," Cornyn said.

Another Republican, South Carolina Sen. Lindsey Graham, found out from TV news.

Moran, a second-term lawmaker from Kansas who isn't known for making waves, and Lee, a two-term senator from Utah who has clashed with Trump, have been talking over the past 10 days about the health care legislation and agreed the GOP bill did not go far enough to repeal Obamacare or address rising health-care costs. They decided to announce their position to make the bill's fate clear and allow senators to move on, Moran said.

"It could have been prolonged for days or weeks while no one said anything," Moran said in an interview.

Moran, who oversaw the Senate Republicans' 2014 election campaigns, concluded last week he wouldn't vote for the latest version of the bill but "gave myself a weekend in Kansas to think about it," he said.

Lee had helped draft an amendment, along with fellow conservative Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, that would allow insurers to sell skimpy plans alongside more robust ones to lower costs. Cruz agreed to some changes in wording by GOP leaders, but Lee thought the new language allowed too many Obama-era regulations to remain in place.

After talking again, Moran and Lee agreed Monday night on a statement drafted earlier in the day. They issued their statement shortly after a White House dinner attended by seven GOP senators - all likely yes votes on the health care bill. Neither Lee nor Moran attended.

A Lee spokesman said the statement - and its timing - "had nothing to do with the White House dinner. It was not a reaction in any way."

The statement was made public as soon as it was ready, the spokesman said.

Neither Trump nor McConnell received advance warning about the statement, although it's likely that neither the president nor the Senate leader was completely surprised.

Trump and Vice President Mike Pence spent the weekend calling lawmakers, including Lee and at least seven other GOP senators, according to the administration. Trump talked politics, while Pence discussed policy.

Trump called Lee on Saturday, and Lee told the president he was leaning against the bill, for the reasons he later made public.

Lee told Utah's KSL Newsradio that he had a great conversation with Trump, when he told the president his "consumer freedom" amendment had been weakened and that he wasn't sure that he could support the bill.

"He was encouraging to me and said, you know, 'Just see what changes you can make to it,'" Lee said.

Lee and McConnell did not talk over the weekend, but Lee spoke twice to Cornyn, R-Texas, the majority whip.

Trump, who frequently takes to Twitter to announce proposals or denounce opponents, was blindsided by, of all things, a tweet.

He told reporters Tuesday he was "very surprised when the two folks came out last night, because we thought they were in fairly good shape. But they did. And, you know, everybody has their own reason."

Moran said while he remained committed to repealing the health care law, Congress needs to make a "fresh start" on writing a replacement bill in an "open legislative process."

"We should not put our stamp of approval on bad policy," he said, in a statement that followed the tweet.

In his own statement, Lee said the GOP bill does not repeal all the Obamacare tax increases and "doesn't go far enough in lowering premiums for middle class families; nor does it create enough free space from the most costly Obamacare regulations."

Both explanations were issued on social media.

"Twitter is a nice medium to get your message out," Lee's spokesman said.

Associated Press writers Jill Colvin, Catherine Lucey and Erica Werner in Washington, John Hanna in Topeka, Kansas, and Michelle Price in Salt Lake City contributed to this report.

Deaths at swimming hole raise questions about flood warnings

By ANITA SNOW and ANGIE WANG, Associated Press

TONTO NATIONAL FOREST, Ariz. (AP) — The deaths of nine people who were swept away in a flash flood at a swimming hole in central Arizona have raised questions about whether the government should have done more to warn the public about the dangers of floodwaters in wilderness areas.

The nine people who died and a man who remains missing were swept away Saturday after a torrent of water from a thunderstorm upstream roared through the Tonto National Forest. Officials say members of an extended family who died in the flood had no warning about the approaching surge of water.

The storm dumped up to 1.5 inches (3.8 centimeters) of rain in an hour, prompting a flash flood warning from the National Weather Service. Though the service sent out a flash-flood warning over cellphone networks, service in the remote area is patchy at best. Unless they had a weather radio, the swimmers would have been unaware.

Crews, meanwhile, spent four hours Tuesday searching for 27-year-old Hector Miguel Garnica, whose wife, three young children and extended family members were killed in the flood. His family gathered at the mountain swimming hole about 100 miles (160 kilometers) northeast of Phoenix to celebrate his wife's birthday.

The search was suspended over concerns that thunderstorms moving through the area Tuesday would cause more flooding. It's scheduled to resume Wednesday.

Crews had hoped that Hector Garnica would still be alive. But Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management spokeswoman Tiffany Davila said crews who have searched for Garnica for three days now believe they are working a recovery effort.

Officials have said people headed to wilderness areas should check weather alerts ahead of time to determine whether it's safe. They note that it's hard to predict where rain will fall in the desert Southwest, and people should know that heavy downpours can cause flash flooding.

Even so, that hasn't stopped people from saying more should be done to protect the public from flash floods.

Steve Stevens, a volunteer firefighter with the nearby Water Wheel Fire and Medical District, said there needs to be a way for visitors to get flash flood alerts on their phones.

Stevens, who has lived in the area for 20 years, said the fire station and local church have extenders that provide cell service to the area around those two locations, but it needs to cover the whole forest.

There is no system currently in place to specifically warn people about the potential dangers of flash floods at the Tonto National Forest, said Forest Service spokeswoman Carrie Templin.

"If our employees happen to be out in the forest at the time, and they hear a weather warning, they share that with members of the public they may cross," she said. There are also signs posted around the forest that warn of hazardous conditions, including potential flash floods.

Templin said there isn't a more comprehensive system in place to alert people because the forest is more than 3 million acres and there are over 5,000 roads.

Because there is a potential for a flash flood at any time, it would be "incredibly difficult, if not impossible" to close parts of the forest when flash flood warnings are issued, Templin said.

Detective Sgt. David Hornung of the Gila County Sheriff's Office said his agency has no plans to add

warning signs or close the forest during monsoon season.

"I'm not trying to be negative, but you could put up all the signs you want, and people are going to still want to come in here and recreate. We have a hard time, when they close the forest due to fire restrictions, of keeping people out," Hornung said.

AP reporters Clarice Silber and Paul Davenport in Phoenix and Michael Balsamo in Los Angeles also contributed to this report.

Powerful opioid suspected in 10-year-old Miami boy's death

By JENNIFER KAY and CURT ANDERSON, Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — A 10-year-old boy from a drug-ridden Miami neighborhood apparently died of a fentanyl overdose last month, becoming one of Florida's littlest victims of the opioid crisis, authorities said Tuesday. But how he came into contact with the powerful painkiller is a mystery.

Fifth-grader Alton Banks died June 23 after a visit to the pool in the city's Overtown section. He began vomiting at home, was found unconscious that evening and was pronounced dead at a hospital. Preliminary toxicology tests showed he had fentanyl in his system, authorities said.

"We don't believe he got it at his home," Miami-Dade State Attorney Katherine Fernandez Rundle said. "It could be as simple as touching it. It could have been a towel at the pool."

She added: "We just don't know."

The case has underscored how frighteningly prevalent fentanyl has become — and how potent it is. Exposure to just tiny amounts can be devastating.

Investigators said Alton may have been exposed to the drug on his walk home in Overtown, a poor, high-crime neighborhood where Assistant Miami Fire Chief Pete Gomez said he has seen a spike in overdoses in the past year and where needles sometimes litter the streets.

"There is an epidemic," Gomez said. "Overtown seems to have the highest percentage of where these incidents are occurring."

The three-block walk between the pool and Alton's home took him down streets that appeared relatively clean Tuesday, but on the block in the other direction from his home, trash littered the pavement and empty lots. Homeless people slept in the shade of an Interstate 95 overpass.

Detectives are still trying to piece together the boy's final day. Rundle appealed to the public for information.

"This is of such great importance. We need to solve this case," she said. "I believe this may be the youngest victim of this scourge in our community."

The boy's mother, Shantell Banks, was informed of the preliminary findings last week. A distraught Banks told The Miami Herald that her son was a "fun kid" who wanted to become an engineer and loved the NFL's Carolina Panthers, especially Cam Newton.

Jessie Davis, who lives in an apartment house next to the building where Alton lived, said her grandchildren, ages 8, 9 and 10, regularly make the same walk to the nearby park with a swimming pool. She said she initially thought the pool water made Alton sick and was shocked by news reports that he had been exposed to fentanyl.

"Where would a 10-year-old baby get something like that?" Davis said.

Thinking about her own grandchildren going to the pool, Davis said, "I'm going to tell them, 'Don't touch nothing.' I don't know whether they think it's candy, but somebody needs to tell these kids something."

The Florida Department of Children and Families said it is conducting its own investigation, in addition to that of the police.

Fentanyl is a synthetic painkiller that has been used for decades to treat cancer patients and others in severe pain. But recently it has been front-and-center in the U.S. opioid abuse crisis.

Perhaps best known as the drug that killed pop star Prince, it is many times stronger than heroin. Dealers often mix it with heroin, a combination that has often proved lethal.

Fentanyl is so powerful that some police departments have warned officers not to even touch it. Last year, three police dogs in Broward County got sick after sniffing the drug during a federal raid, officials said.

Gomez said his crews wear long sleeves, coveralls, gloves and masks while handling fentanyl. And "you never want to start reaching into people's pockets," he said, explaining that crews often cut people's pockets open for fear of pricking themselves with needles.

The Florida Legislature addressed the epidemic, passing a law that imposes stiff mandatory sentences on dealers caught with 4 grams (0.14 ounces) or more of fentanyl or its variants. The law also makes it possible to charge dealers with murder if they provide a fatal dose of fentanyl or drugs mixed with fentanyl. The law goes into effect Oct. 1.

Nearly 300 overdose deaths in Miami-Dade County last year involved variants of fentanyl, according to the medical examiner's office. Statewide, fentanyl and its variants killed 853 people in the first half of 2016. Of those, only nine were younger than 18.

Hastert faces sex-offender treatment with prison release

By **CARYN ROUSSEAU** and **MICHAEL TARM**, Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — Disgraced former U.S. House Speaker Dennis Hastert is far from putting his child-sex-abuse scandal behind him after being released from federal prison in Minnesota where he served a little over a year for a related banking conviction. He now must undergo intensive court-ordered sex-offender treatment designed to ensure he never again poses a risk to children.

The Federal Bureau of Prisons confirmed Tuesday that Hastert was released the day before and transferred to a Chicago re-entry facility. It wasn't clear whether Hastert was in a halfway house or under home confinement. His attorneys declined comment, and the Federal Bureau of Prisons said in an email only that he is now "under the jurisdiction" of the Chicago re-entry management office.

The Illinois Republican was sentenced to 15 months in prison in April 2016 in a banking violations case that revealed he had sexually abused teenagers while coaching wrestling at a suburban Chicago high school. He was also given a two-year term of supervised release after he was out from behind bars.

The treatment Hastert faces is likely to include a lie-detector test to determine how many times the 75-year-old Illinois Republican sexually abused kids. Another common treatment for sex-offenders involves a penile plethysmograph, which gauges a known molester's physical reaction to specific images, according to former federal agents who dealt with child abuse cases.

Hastert could potentially put himself in legal jeopardy if he refuses any of the tests or doesn't appear to be forthcoming about any instances of abuse, said Francey Hakes, a former special assistant to the U.S. attorney general overseeing Justice Department child-exploitation units.

If he doesn't cooperate fully, a judge could send him back to prison; but if he admits to other cases, that could open new investigations, she said.

"It is a Catch-22 of sex offender treatment," she said in a telephone interview.

Hastert, one of the highest-ranking U.S. politicians to ever go to prison, was the nation's longest-serving GOP House speaker, second in the line to the presidency from 1999 to 2007 under Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush. He pleaded guilty in 2015 to violating banking law in seeking to pay \$3.5 million in hush money to keep the sex abuse secret. While the molestation of children underpinned the case, Hastert couldn't be charged with sexual abuse because the statutes of limitations had long since run out.

Unless Hastert participates fully and honestly in the treatment program — including by admitting an attraction to children — Hakes said there would be reason to think he still is a risk.

"If I was a relative or lived in his community, I wouldn't leave him alone around my children," Hakes said.

Because Hastert wasn't convicted of child abuse, he is not required to register as a sex offender. However, federal officials could choose to notify Hastert's victims or local authorities to make them aware he is out of prison.

Maia Christopher, the executive director of the Association For The Treatment Of Sexual Abusers, says treatment can also include looking back at abusers' childhoods, considering whether mental illness is a

factor and assessing whether their social networks can play a role in preventing further abuse.

Scott Cross, who testified at Hastert's sentencing hearing that Hastert abused him as a teen, said Tuesday that he didn't ask to be notified of Hastert's release from prison and remains intent on moving on with his life. Cross still believes Hastert's sentence was a "slap on the wrist" but doesn't fault federal authorities.

"I don't have any control over this stuff," he told The Associated Press. "I did what I thought was right for me. I'm not going to look back on it."

Judge Thomas M. Durkin branded Hastert "a serial child molester" during his sentencing in Chicago, pointing to at least four students abused by Hastert when he coached at Yorkville High School, from 1965 to 1981.

Cross, a former wrestler, testified that he was abused when he was in the school locker room. Court filings describe how Hastert would also sit in a recliner in the high school locker room with a direct view of the showers.

Experts disagree on the extent to which sex-offender treatment can help. Jim Clemente, a former FBI supervisory agent who frequently testifies in child sex-abuse cases, says analysts often try to determine whether an abuser is sexually attracted to children or is what he called "a situational offender" who isn't necessarily motivated by an attraction to kids.

"There is no cure for the former," he said.

Associated Press reporters Michael Kunzelman and Don Babwin contributed to this report.

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House budget blueprint key to success of Trump tax agenda

By ANDREW TAYLOR, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Despite opposition from Republican moderates and conservatives, House leaders are pressing ahead with a budget plan whose success is critical to the party's hopes to deliver on one of President Donald Trump's top priorities — a GOP-only effort to overhaul the tax code.

The importance of the measure has been magnified by the cratering in the Senate of the Trump-backed effort to repeal President Barack Obama's health care law, leaving a rewrite of the tax code as the best chance for Trump to score a major legislative win this year. The measure would require about \$200 billion worth of cuts to benefit programs and other so-called mandatory spending coupled with the tax plan.

The budget plan unveiled Tuesday is crucial because its passage would pave the way to pass a tax overhaul this fall without the fear of a filibuster by Senate Democrats.

But it also proposes trillions of dollars in cuts to the social safety net and other domestic programs and puts congressional Republicans at odds with Trump over cutting Medicare. It also would sharply boost military spending.

"In past years, the budget has only been a vision. But now, with the Republican Congress and a Republican White House, this budget is a plan for action," said Budget Committee Chair Diane Black, R-Tenn. "Now is our moment to achieve real results."

Unclear, however, is whether GOP leaders can get the budget measure through the House. Conservatives want a larger package of spending cuts to accompany this fall's tax overhaul bill, while moderates are concerned cuts to programs such as food stamps could go too far.

"I just think that if you're dealing with too many mandatory cuts while you're dealing with tax reform you make tax reform that much harder to enact," said Rep. Charlie Dent, R-Pa.

Black announced a committee vote for Wednesday, but was less confident of a vote by the entire House next week; a delay seems likely because of the ongoing quarrel between the GOP's factions.

The House GOP plan proposes to turn Medicare into a voucher-like program in which future retirees would receive a fixed benefit to purchase health insurance on the open market. Republicans have proposed the

idea each year since taking back the House in 2011, but they've never tried to implement it — and that's not going to change now, even with a Republican as president.

"Republicans would destroy the Medicare guarantee for our seniors and inflict bone-deep cuts to Medicaid that would devastate veterans, seniors with long-term care needs, and rural communities," said Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi of California.

The plan promises to balance the budget through unprecedented and politically unworkable cuts across the budget. It calls for turning this year's projected \$700 billion-or-so deficit into a tiny \$9 billion surplus by 2027. It would do so by slashing \$5.4 trillion over the coming decade, including almost \$500 billion from Medicare and \$1.5 trillion from Medicaid and the Obama health law, along with sweeping cuts to benefits such as federal employee pensions, food stamps and tax credits for the working poor.

But in the immediate future the GOP measure is a budget buster. It would add almost \$30 billion to Trump's \$668 billion request for national defense. The GOP budget plan would cut non-defense agencies by \$5 billion. And of the more than \$4 trillion in promised saving from mandatory programs like Medicare and Medicaid, the plan assumes just \$203 billion would actually pass this year.

Democrats focused their fire on the plan's sweeping promises to cut from almost every corner of the budget other than Social Security, defense and veterans programs. At the same time, they have little fear those cuts would actually be implemented.

Top Budget Committee Democrat John Yarmuth of Kentucky told reporters the GOP "utilizes a lot of gimmicks and vagueness to reach some semblance of theoretical balance and also hides a lot of the draconian cuts would be inflicted on the American people."

All told, the GOP plan would spend about \$67 billion more in the upcoming annual appropriations bills than would be allowed under harsh spending limits set by a 2011 budget and debt agreement. It pads war accounts by \$10 billion. And, like Trump's budget, the House GOP plan assumes rosy economic projections that would erase another \$1.5 trillion from the deficit over 10 years.

The budget resolution is nonbinding. It would allow Republicans controlling Congress to pass follow-up legislation through the Senate without the threat of a filibuster by Democrats. GOP leaders and the White House plan to use that measure to rewrite the tax code.

As proposed by House leaders, tax reform would essentially be deficit-neutral, which means cuts to tax rates would be mostly "paid for" by closing various tax breaks such as the deduction for state and local taxes. However, the GOP plan would devote \$300 billion claimed from economic growth to the tax reform effort.

But conservatives are insisting on adding cuts to so-called mandatory programs, which make up more than two-thirds of the federal budget and basically run on autopilot.

The story has been corrected to fix the spelling of Rep. John Yarmuth's name.

Metal detectors at Jerusalem shrine trigger new tensions

By KARIN LAUB, Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — A dispute over metal detectors is escalating into a new showdown between Israel and the Muslim world over a Jerusalem shrine that has triggered major Israeli-Palestinian confrontations in the past.

Israel says installing the devices at the gates to the walled compound after Palestinians launched an attack there last week is a routine security measure. Palestinians claim Israel is trying to expand control over the Muslim-run site that is also revered by Jews.

Muslim worshippers have stepped up protests following an appeal from clerics to pray in the streets rather than submit to the new procedures. The confrontation could come to a head Friday, the highlight of the Muslim religious week, when tens of thousands typically converge on the holy site for prayers.

WHAT CAUSED THE LATEST TENSIONS?

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Three members of Israel's Arab Muslim minority fired from the sacred compound at a police post near one of the gates on Friday, killing two Israeli officers before being shot dead. Israel's police chief said they had hidden weapons in the compound beforehand and ordered it closed for two days of searches. The closure marked only the third time the shrine had been closed since Israel captured Jerusalem's Old City and its holy sites, along with other territories, in 1967.

On Sunday, Israel began gradually reopening the site. By Tuesday, five of the eight gates used by Muslims had been fitted with metal detectors, and three of those five gates were open, Muslim officials said. A ninth gate, used by non-Muslim visitors, previously had been fitted with metal detectors and was also open Tuesday.

WHY IS THE SHRINE IMPORTANT?

The Jerusalem landmark is the centerpiece of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, looming large in rival national and religious narratives.

Jews revere it as the Temple Mount, or home of biblical Temples destroyed two millennia ago. It is the holiest site of their religion. For now, Jews worship at the Western Wall, a retaining wall of the compound.

Muslims believe the hilltop compound marks the spot from which Prophet Muhammad ascended to heaven. Known to them as the Noble Sanctuary, it is the third holiest site of Islam and houses the Dome of the Rock and Al-Aqsa mosques.

WHO CONTROLS IT?

After capturing east Jerusalem, including its Old City, and the West Bank in 1967, Israel sought to avoid a confrontation with the Muslim world. It allowed Muslims to keep administering the Jerusalem compound. Jews could visit, but not pray there.

Jordan, east Jerusalem's pre-1967 ruler, remained custodian of the shrine. Employees of the Muslim administration, or Waqf, stayed on Jordan's payroll.

For decades, the status quo held, in part because leading rabbis, citing religious purity laws, banned Jews from entering. In recent years, religious opinion has shifted, and growing numbers of Jews are visiting the compound, with Israeli police and Waqf guards enforcing the no-prayer rule.

This shift has stoked Muslim fears of a purported Israeli plan to expand Jewish control there. Israel has denied this, most recently after the weekend attack when Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that the "status quo will be preserved."

WHO IS THE GATEKEEPER?

The two sides disagree.

Jordan and the Waqf have said that after 1967, the Waqf remained in charge of who can enter the compound. They said this rule was in place until 2000, when a provocative visit to the site by then-Israeli opposition leader Ariel Sharon helped trigger a Palestinian uprising that only ebbed in 2005.

Israel says it has always been in charge of security at the compound, including the gates.

In recent years, Israeli security forces have typically been posted outside the gates, conducting spot checks of some of those entering or holding the ID cards of suspected troublemakers until the end of prayers. At times of heightened tensions, police enforce Israeli access restrictions, such as an entry ban for men below a certain age.

Waqf guards are posted inside the gates and have the right to turn any visitors away.

THE ISRAELI VIEW

Israel says the metal detectors are a routine security measure.

"Two Israeli police officers were just murdered on the Temple Mount by terrorists who smuggled in guns," government spokesman David Keyes said Tuesday. "Magnetometers are vital for security. That's why they are at the Western Wall and at holy sites around the world."

Police would not say what was found in the search of the compound. On Sunday, Israel's Army Radio quoted the Jerusalem police chief as saying officers found dozens of knives as well as slingshots, stun grenades and binoculars, but no guns or live ammunition.

Israel previously accused Waqf officials of allowing Palestinian protesters to hoard stones, sticks and firecrackers for use in confrontations with police.

THE PALESTINIAN VIEW

Muslim clerics and Palestinian politicians contend Israel is changing the status quo under the guise of security,

Ikrema Sabri, a top Muslim official, said installing the detectors "is an attempt to impose Israeli sovereignty over the mosque" compound.

Rami Hamdallah, the prime minister of the Palestinian autonomy government in the West Bank, expressed his "absolute rejection of Israel's security pretexts in changing the status quo." He also warned of a "deterioration of the security situation" if the measures continue.

The local Muslim leadership and the Jordanian-run Waqf have urged the faithful to pray in "streets and alleys" rather than pass through the metal detectors.

Since Sunday, there have been sporadic clashes between small groups of Palestinian stone-throwers and Israeli security forces in and near the Old City. Meanwhile, worshippers have lined up in the streets, dozens at a time, to perform prayers in the streets.

MUSLIM ARAB WORLD

The Arab League, an umbrella group of Arab countries, and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation have issued separate statements calling on Israel to lift the security measures.

Jordan's King Abdullah II spoke by phone with Netanyahu on Saturday, before the reopening of the shrine, to condemn the attack but also call for de-escalation. The two countries have discreet security ties, but frequently clash over Israel's policies at the Jerusalem site.

Jordan's ruling Hashemite dynasty, with ancestry said to go back to Prophet Muhammad, derives much of its legitimacy from custodianship over the shrine.

Jordanian Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi talked about Jerusalem tensions Tuesday with his Russian counterpart, Sergei Lavrov, Jordan's state news agency Petra said.

Safadi called for "fully and immediately reopening the holy site to worshippers without hindrances," the agency said.

Associated Press writer Ian Deitch in Jerusalem contributed to this report.

Russian lawyer at Trump Tower meeting drew US scrutiny

By **STEPHEN BRAUN**, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Russian lawyer who met with Donald Trump Jr. last year had drawn attention from U.S. government officials even before that now-famous encounter for her work fighting U.S. sanctions that had angered the Kremlin.

At one point, officials tried to seize emails from the attorney, Natalia Veselnitskaya, and deny her entry into the U.S., according to government and legal documents.

The scrutiny focused on Veselnitskaya's ties to Prevezon Holdings Ltd. and its owner, who is the son of a former Russian government official and a fierce advocate for rolling back some of the U.S. sanctions.

Her work underscores the blurry lines in Russia between the government and businesses, deepening the questions about her and the June 2016 meeting with Donald Trump Jr. and other Trump associates.

At the time of the meeting in Trump Tower, Veselnitskaya was helping defend Prevezon against charges it had engaged in money laundering from a \$230 million Russian tax fraud scheme.

The fraud was exposed by Sergei Magnitsky, a Russian lawyer whose death in jail in 2009 prompted U.S. lawmakers to enact a law named for him that imposed travel and financial sanctions against Russians believed to be involved in his death. The sanctions angered President Vladimir Putin because they targeted not only rank-and-file investigators and judges but eventually affected close allies like Alexander Bastrykin, head of the Russian Investigative Committee.

Veselnitskaya also was working with a group of lobbyists trying to weaken the Magnitsky Act. The \$300,000 campaign partly financed by Denis Katsyv, Prevezon's owner and a client of Veselnitskaya's.

Trump Jr. has said Veselnitskaya spent much of their meeting discussing the Magnitsky Act and one of

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its repercussions — Russia blocking U.S. adoptions — despite the fact the session was billed as an opportunity to discuss potentially incriminating information about Democrat Hillary Clinton. According to emails released by Trump Jr., he was told by an associate that the promised information was part of the Russian government's efforts to help his father win the White House.

Veselnitskaya's work history could become fodder for federal and congressional investigators probing whether the Trump campaign coordinated with Russia to meddle in the election. Veselnitskaya has denied having ties to the Kremlin, and President Donald Trump has denied any coordination with Moscow.

Rinat Akhmetshin, a Russian-American lobbyist and former Soviet military official, described Veselnitskaya to The Associated Press as a "very emotional person and a great patriot of Russia." He said he saw no evidence of any direct ties between her and the Russian government.

"She's a hard-working person, very loyal to her clients," said Akhmetshin, who confirmed to AP on Friday that he also attended the Trump Tower meeting.

Despite Russian denials about her working for the government, Veselnitskaya's efforts against the Magnitsky Act would have been beneficial to the Kremlin, given how the law affected its judges, investigators and associates of Putin.

Akhmetshin said Veselnitskaya coordinated frequently with him and others last year in lobbying against the sanctions law. U.S. proponents of the law said the lobbying campaign was also directed at weakening or defeating a proposed expansion of the original measure that authorized the president to sanction individuals, companies or governments complicit in human rights violations and corruption.

That bill passed in December and was signed by President Barack Obama.

As Veselnitskaya was both defending Prevezon and working for its owner's anti-sanctions campaign, U.S. officials began scrutinizing her actions and communications.

Preet Bharara, then the U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York, questioned Veselnitskaya for billing the government \$2,000 for a two-day stay at New York's lavish Plaza Hotel during depositions of several Prevezon defendants, including Katsyv.

"Ms. Veselnitskaya appears to have stayed at a less expensive hotel during the depositions, but moved to the Plaza after the depositions concluded, and only after the Court orally stated that the government would be responsible for reimbursing defendants' expenses," Bharara said in a letter to the trial judge. Bharara was ousted by the new administration in March.

Prosecutors also tried to use a grand jury subpoena to learn more about Veselnitskaya's communications with another Russian lawyer for Prevezon. Prosecutors said that lawyer, Andrey Pavlov, filed sham lawsuits against investors in Russian companies and associates with members of a Russian organized crime group described as "a shadowy criminal syndicate — identified only as 'the Organization.'"

The documents do not explain why prosecutors sought Veselnitskaya's communications with Pavlov or detail whether any correspondence was turned over to federal authorities. A spokesman for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York, which prosecuted the case, declined comment.

In a declaration she filed in the case in January 2016, Veselnitskaya complained she had "been harassed by the (U.S.) government" despite being given temporary permission to work in New York on the Prevezon case. She said she was detained at London's Heathrow Airport on a return trip from the U.S. and "unjustifiably" subjected to a strip search.

A federal prosecutor explained in a hearing that U.S. immigration officials had repeatedly denied her entry, but did not explain the reasons. The Justice Department finally allowed Veselnitskaya to temporarily perform legal work in the U.S. under "immigration parole," a special visa requiring approval from the U.S. attorney general.

Trump used that visa clearance to defend his son's meeting with Veselnitskaya, saying then-Attorney General Loretta Lynch had approved her entry to the U.S. Lynch has said she has no knowledge of Veselnitskaya's travel.

Veselnitskaya has cast her work in the U.S. last year as a success. In May, the Justice Department settled its case, with Prevezon paying \$6 million in fines but admitting no guilt.

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Dog pulls baby deer from water to save it from drowning

PORT JEFFERSON, N.Y. (AP) — A dog that saw a baby deer in danger of drowning in New York jumped in and dragged it to shore.

The daring rescue in Long Island Sound was caught on video by his owner Mark Freeley. He tells WCBS-TV (<http://cbsloc.al/2uyz1m7>) that he was taking the English golden retriever named Storm on a walk Sunday morning when Storm “just plunged into the water and started swimming out to the fawn, grabbed it by the neck, and started swimming to shore.”

Video shows Storm pushing the deer to shore, lying next to the fawn and nudging it with his nose.

Freeley says animal rescuers soon arrived and the deer ran back into the water. They used a rope to pull the fawn back in.

The fawn is recovering at an animal rescue center.

AP Explains: Korean border village, site for rivals' talks

By HYUNG-JIN KIM and KIM TONG-HYUNG, Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — Straddling the world's most heavily fortified border, the Korean truce village of Panmunjom is a potential flashpoint where North Korean soldiers hacked to death two American officers at the height of the Cold War.

It's also where the rival Koreas have held rare high-profile talks, and top American officials have visited to demonstrate American commitment to defending South Korea.

A look at Panmunjom, a day after South Korea's new liberal president offered talks with North Korea at the village in what would be the Koreas' first face-to-face meeting since late 2015.

FARMING VILLAGE TO ARMISTICE SITE

Panmunjom, once an obscure farming village, is where an armistice was signed to pause the 1950-53 Korean War, with North Korea and China on one side and the American-led U.N. Command on the other.

No civilians live there, and a cluster of blue huts form a Joint Security Area overseen by North Korea and the U.N. Command.

It's located in the 248-kilometer (154-mile) -long Demilitarized Zone that forms the de facto Korean border. The DMZ is guarded on both sides by hundreds of thousands of combat-ready troops, razor-wire fences and tank traps. More than a million mines are believed to be buried inside it.

At Panmunjom, South Korean troops wearing aviator sunglasses stand in taekwondo poses with their legs apart, arms bent and fists clenched. North Korean soldiers use binoculars to monitor the South. The soldiers are often only several yards (several meters) from each other.

These days, it's also a popular tourist spot drawing visitors on both sides. Tourists from the South are often told by their guides to be extremely careful about what gestures they make so as not to antagonize the nearby North Korean soldiers.

The 1953 armistice has yet to be replaced with a peace treaty, leaving the Korean Peninsula technically in a state of war. About 28,500 U.S. troops are deployed in South Korea.

DEADLY CLASHES

In August 1976, two American army officers were killed by ax-wielding North Korean soldiers. The U.S. officers had been sent out to trim a 40-foot (12-meter) tree that obstructed the view from a checkpoint. The attack prompted Washington to fly nuclear-capable B-52 bombers toward the DMZ to intimidate North Korea.

In 1984, North Korean and U.N. Command soldiers traded gunfire after a Soviet citizen defected by sprinting to the South Korean sector of the truce village. The incident left three North Korean soldiers and one South Korean soldier dead.

In 1996, North Korea sent hundreds of armed troops into Panmunjom after declaring the armistice a “useless piece of paper.” South Korea boosted its surveillance to its highest level in 15 years, and the

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North Korean troops later withdrew.

The rival Koreas have had similar violent confrontations along other parts of the DMZ in the past. No deadly clashes have occurred in recent years, but a 2015 land mine blast that maimed two South Korean soldiers pushed the Koreas to the brink of an armed conflict. South Korea blames North Korea for the explosion.

PRESIDENTIAL VISITS

U.S. presidents and other top officials have often traveled to Panmunjom and other areas of the DMZ at times of heightened tension on the Korean Peninsula. They have peered through binoculars across the border and vowed to boost the U.S. military alliance with South Korea.

In 1993, then President Bill Clinton visited Panmunjom when the North Korean nuclear crisis first flared. In 2002, President George W. Bush visited the DMZ a few weeks after he labeled North Korea part of an "axis of evil."

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and Defense Secretary Robert Gates visited Panmunjom in July 2010, four months after the sinking of a South Korean warship blamed on North Korea killed 46 sailors. North Korea has denied responsibility.

In 2012, ahead of a planned North Korean long-range rocket launch, President Barack Obama visited a frontline U.S. military camp just south of the DMZ and told American troops they are protectors of "freedom's frontier." Obama's trip came days after North Korean leader Kim Jong Un visited Panmunjom.

In March, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson began a visit to South Korea by touring Panmunjom. Hours later, in Seoul, he declared that all options, including pre-emptive military action, were on the table regarding North Korea.

In April, Vice President Mike Pence visited Panmunjom and later warned North Korea not to test America's resolve and military power.

SITE FOR RARE TALKS

Military officials from North Korea and the U.N. Command used to meet irregularly at Panmunjom to oversee the armistice. In recent years, it has been used for talks between the two Koreas.

South Korean President Moon has proposed that an initial round of talks on easing cross-border tensions be held Friday in a North Korean building in the northern part of the village, followed by a second round on Aug. 1 in a South Korean facility in the southern portion to discuss reunions of families separated by the Korean War.

The most recent high-profile meeting in Panmunjom was in August 2015, when negotiators for the rivals met for nearly 40 hours and reached a deal that allowed them to pull back from a military standoff triggered by the land mine explosion. Animosity flared again after North Korea conducted a fourth nuclear test in January 2016.

Panmunjom has also been used to arrange civilian exchanges and humanitarian programs, such as temporarily family reunions.

Vatican court rejects motions to dismiss in hospital case

By NICOLE WINFIELD, Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — A Vatican tribunal rejected attempts by two former executives of the pope's children's hospital to dismiss an embezzlement case, asserting Tuesday it could prosecute them on charges they diverted nearly a half-million euros in hospital donations to renovate a top cardinal's penthouse.

Lawyers for former hospital president Giuseppe Profiti and ex-treasurer Massimo Spina argued that the Vatican court had no jurisdiction to prosecute activities of a hospital foundation that was located in Italy, not the Vatican.

But tribunal president Judge Paolo Papanti-Pelletier rejected the motion as the trial opened and set a new round of hearings for Sept. 7-9.

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Profiti has said the funds he used from the Bambino Gesù (Baby Jesus) hospital foundation to renovate Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone's apartment were an investment, since he intended to use the flat for future fundraising events for the hospital.

Bertone agreed to host such parties, saying he would take care to ensure that "third parties" — not the foundation — would pay for any renovations needed. He subsequently said he paid 300,000 euros of his own money for the work because he couldn't find anyone else to pay, and didn't know that the foundation had also paid 422,000 euros to the same builders.

The scandal is the latest to strike the Holy See as Pope Francis works to clean up centuries of shady business dealings in the walled-in, 44-hectare (109-acre) offshore city state, the world's smallest. And it comes as Francis copes with the fallout from the embarrassing exit of his top financial adviser, Cardinal George Pell, who returned to his native Australia last week to face trial on sex abuse charges.

Bertone, the former Vatican secretary of state, wasn't charged or placed under investigation in the case, even though he personally benefited from the donations. After the scandal broke in 2015, Bertone made a 150,000-euro "donation" to the hospital for research, but insisted it wasn't in any way repayment for the money spent on his flat.

Also spared prosecution by the Vatican were the Castelli Re construction company and its owner, Gianantonio Bandera, a longtime Bertone associate who received around 750,000 euros for the whole project.

It's not clear if Italian authorities will launch their own investigation into the deal.

Profiti and Spina face between three and five years in prison and fines starting at 5,000 euros if found guilty of embezzlement by the Vatican court, which asserts jurisdiction over crimes committed on Vatican territory or by its public officials. The penalty can be reduced if the amount diverted is repaid before the trial starts.

Prosecutors accuse Profiti and Spina of a conspiracy to "illicitly use money belonging to the Baby Jesus foundation to benefit Bandera." The indictment makes no suggestion of kickbacks or any other wrongdoing, merely that money belonging to the hospital foundation instead went to "completely extra-institutional" uses.

Profiti has said none of the donations used was intended for childcare.

During the hearing, Spina's lawyer argued that his client could not have transferred money from the foundation because he did not have the authority, and said a letter Bertone wrote that is part of the court file proved it. He suggested that he might call the retired Vatican secretary of state as a witness if further clarification were needed.

Profiti resigned suddenly as president of the hospital in January 2015, nine months into a new three-year term. According to a recent Associated Press investigation, a secret Vatican-authorized task force concluded in 2014 that under his administration, the hospital's mission had been "lost" and was "today more aimed at profit than on caring for children."

Brown, lawmakers celebrate bipartisan cap-and-trade victory

BY JONATHAN J. COOPER, Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — California's signature initiative to fight global warming will get another decade of life after lawmakers from both parties joined Gov. Jerry Brown in extending the law credited with reducing the state's carbon footprint.

Monday night's votes to renew California's cap-and-trade program bolster the Democratic governor's quest to portray the state as a leader in the fight against climate change. At a bipartisan celebratory press conference following the vote, members from both parties noted the contrast with Washington, where Republicans have struggled to pass legislation and have taken a skeptical view of regulations to combat greenhouse gases.

"We didn't come here to Sacramento to just be Republicans and to hate on Democrats," Assembly Republican Leader Chad Mayes said. "We came here to Sacramento to make people's lives better."

The three-bill package now heads to Brown's desk.

Brown has sought to offer the state's cap-and-trade program as a model that can be reproduced in other

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states and even nations to reduce carbon emissions and combat rising temperatures.

"We're only 1 percent of the problem, but we're a lot more a part of the solution," Brown said. "It's not just what we do — it's what other people can follow."

Brown portrays the initiative, which would have ended in 2020 without legislative action, as essential for the survival of civilization. Extending it has been one of his highest priorities as he nears the end of his fourth term.

The legislation was fiercely opposed by some environmentalists who say it's too timid for progressive California, especially those who work to clean up the notoriously smoggy air in parts of Los Angeles, the San Francisco Bay Area and the agricultural Central Valley. Conservatives also fought the measure, saying it will raise costs in an already expensive state.

But Brown and Democratic leaders were able to cobble together the two-thirds support needed in both chambers to extend the law through 2030. One Republican in the Senate and seven in the Assembly joined a majority of Democrats in supporting the bill.

Cap and trade puts a limit on carbon emissions and requires polluters to obtain permits to release greenhouse gases. Some permits, known as allowances, are given away while others are auctioned, generating billions of dollars in revenue for the state.

Brown and legislative leaders also successfully negotiated two companion bills that helped secure the two-thirds majority necessary to extend cap and trade. One aims to improve local air quality and helped bring some Democrats on board with the cap-and-trade deal. Mayes, meanwhile, brought some Assembly Republicans along by advocating another bill that may give the party more of a say in how to spend money collected through cap and trade in the future.

Still, the cap-and-trade extension bill faced stiff opposition from Democrats and Republicans alike in the weeks leading up to the vote, prompting last minute pleas from Democrats and a near apocalyptic address from Brown about a California devastated by climate change.

"I didn't know where it was going a few days ago," Brown said, acknowledging the difficulty in winning support.

Republican critics likened the bill to a tax that will hit Californians at the gas pump and the grocery store. The nonpartisan legislative analyst said last year that the existing cap-and-trade program accounted for an 11-cent-per-gallon increase in gasoline prices. The office has not analyzed the extension proposal.

"We could shut down the entire state of California and it would have absolutely no effect on the global climate," said Sen. Andy Vidak, a Republican from Hanford in the agricultural Central Valley who voted against the extension. "But what is measureable is the effect this tax will have on the poorest of the poor in my district and across California."

Local environmental justice advocates, meanwhile, said cap and trade allows polluters to keep fouling the air around major sources of pollution such as oil refineries and objected to concessions Brown made to the oil industry and other polluters in a bid to win support from Republicans and moderate Democrats.

State law requires California to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 40 percent from 1990 levels by 2030 — among the most aggressive mandates for carbon reduction in the world. Without cap and trade, state regulators would be forced to enact restrictive mandates on polluters that would be burdensome for businesses and significantly more expensive for consumers, Brown said.

Associated Press writer Sophia Bollag contributed to this report.

Afghan team among medal winners at global robotics event

By JESSICA GRESKO, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — An international robotics competition in Washington attracted teams of teenagers from more than 150 nations. The team that drew the most attention at the FIRST Global Challenge, which ended Tuesday, was a squad of girls from Afghanistan who were twice rejected for U.S. visas before President Donald Trump intervened. But there were even more stories than there were teams. Here are a few:

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RESULTS:

Teams left with gold, silver and bronze medals in a variety of categories.

The Europe team won a gold award for getting the most cumulative points over the course of the competition. Poland got silver and Armenia bronze. Finland won a gold award for winning the best win-loss record. Silver went to Singapore and bronze to India.

There were also awards for engineering design, innovation and international unity, among others. The Afghanistan team won a silver medal for "courageous achievement." The award recognized teams that exhibited a "can-do" attitude even under difficult circumstances or when things didn't go as planned. The gold medal in that category went to the South Sudan team and bronze to the Oman team, whose students are deaf.

The 2018 competition will be held in Mexico City.

GIRL POWER:

Sixty percent of the teams participating in the competition were founded, led or organized by women. Of the 830 teens participating, 209 were girls. And there were six all-girl teams, including not only the Afghan squad but also teams from the United States, Ghana, Jordan, the Palestinian territories and the Pacific island nation of Vanuatu. Vanuatu's nickname: the "SMART Sistas."

Samira Bader, 16, on the Jordanian team, says "it's very difficult for us because everyone thinks" building robots is "only for boys." She said her team wants to prove that "girls can do it."

The three-girl U.S. team included sisters Colleen and Katie Johnson of Everett, Washington, and Sanjna Ravichandar of Plainsboro, New Jersey. Colleen Johnson, 16, said her team looks forward "to a day when an all-girls team is going to be no more special than an all-boys team or a co-ed team, just when that's completely normal and accepted."

The team competing from Brunei was also all female, though a male member previously worked on the project.

WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM MY FRIENDS:

The team from Iran got some help building their robot from American students. It turns out that the competition's kit of robot parts including wheels, brackets, sprockets, gears, pulleys and belts was not approved for shipment to Iran due to sanctions involving technology exports to the country. So the competition recruited a robotics team at George C. Marshall high school in Falls Church, Virginia, to help. Iran's team designed the robot, and about five Marshall students built it in the United States.

The team explained on its competition webpage that "our friends in Washington made our ideas as a robot."

Because of the time difference between the countries, the three-member team and its mentor were sometimes up at midnight or 3 a.m. in Iran to talk to their collaborators.

Amin Dadkhah, 15, called working with the American students "a good and exciting experience for both of us." Kirianna Baker, one of the U.S. students who built the robot, agreed. "Having a team across the world with a fresh set of eyes is very valuable," she said.

TEAM HOPE:

A group of three refugees from Syria competed as team "Refugee," also known as team "Hope." All three fled Syria to Lebanon three years ago because of violence in their country.

Mohamad Nabih Alkhateeb, Amar Kabour and Maher Alisawui named their robot "Robogee," a combination of the words "robot" and "refugee."

Alkhateeb, 17, and Kabour, 16, say they want to be robotics engineers, and Alisawui wants to be a computer engineer. Kabour said it's important to the team to win, to "tell the world" refugees are "here and they can do it."

Alkhateeb also said living as a refugee has been difficult, but he hopes to someday return home. "I will go back after I have finished my education so I can rebuild Syria again," he said. Some 11 million people — half of the Syrian population — have been forced from their homes.

Follow Jessica Gresko on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/jessicagresko> .

Hi Bixby: Samsung phone's voice assistant now speaks English

By **YOUKYUNG LEE, AP Technology Writer**

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — Samsung Electronics said its Bixby voice assistant for smartphones will start speaking English but only in two countries: South Korea and the U.S.

The South Korean tech giant said starting Wednesday, users of the Galaxy S8 smartphones can speak in American English to their phones to turn on the flashlight, take a selfie or make the phone search for say, pictures from a summer vacation, and create an album.

Samsung did not say why it could not make Bixby in English available to users outside South Korea or the U.S. or when it will become available in other languages in other countries.

The service, comparable to Apple's Siri or Google Assistant, was previously available only in Korean.

Samsung says its virtual assistant can be activated by saying "Hi Bixby" to the phone or by clicking a button on the side of the S8 phones.

The rollout of the Bixby English version was delayed by a couple of months. Samsung's mobile chief Koh Dong-jin had earlier told reporters that the service would be available in English before June.

It also comes about one month before Samsung is widely expected to announce its latest iteration of the Galaxy Note smartphone after the discontinuation of its fire-prone Galaxy Note 7 phone last year.

Samsung, the world's largest smartphone maker, is a latecomer in the virtual assistant race. Its rivals introduced their versions several years ago but the company said it believes its status as the world's dominant mobile device manufacturer will give it an edge. Bixby also enables users to find more information about real-world items by pointing a phone's camera.

Asian shares mostly higher as focus turns to central bankers

By **ELAINE KURTENBACH, AP Business Writer**

TOKYO (AP) — Shares were mostly higher in Asia on Wednesday after a mixed finish on Wall Street. Investors were turning their focus to policy meetings by central bank boards in Japan and the EU.

KEEPING SCORE: Japan's Nikkei 225 stock index edged 0.1 percent higher to 20,021.49 and the Hang Seng in Hong Kong climbed 0.5 percent to 26,648.35. The S&P ASX 200 in Australia jumped 0.6 percent to 5,720.90 while the Shanghai Composite index added 0.5 percent to 3,204.33. South Korea's Kospi slipped 0.2 percent to 2,422.07. Shares in Southeast Asia were mixed.

WALL STREET: The reaction to the failure of a Senate Republican health care proposal was muted. After four months of struggles over health care, investors don't expect as much from Congressional Republicans and President Donald Trump on other issues. Insurers lost ground but gains in tech and consumer stocks pushed the Standard & Poor's 500 index and Nasdaq composite to new highs. The S&P 500 rose 0.1 percent to 2,460.61, just above the record it set Friday. The Dow Jones industrial average shed 0.3 percent to 21,574.73, while the Nasdaq composite advanced 0.5 percent to 6,344.31 as tech companies like Facebook and Alphabet, the parent of Google, rose.

ANALYST VIEWPOINT: "The failure in the Senate to modify Obamacare followed immediately by a failure to cancel it outright are but the latest miscues suggesting a 4-year lame duck presidency. Reform, deregulation and fiscal stimulus that excited markets seven months ago are becoming evermore distant memories and expectations for GDP growth and Fed action are falling accordingly," DBS Bank (Hong Kong) said in a commentary.

CENTRAL BANKS: European Central Bank head Mario Draghi is expected to tread softly on Thursday as the European Union's 19-country euro currency union monetary authority inches toward scaling back its

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monetary stimulus in the form of 60 billion euros (\$69 billion) in monthly bond purchases. Japan's central bank, likewise, is not expected to make any drastic moves, given recent subdued data on inflation and consumer sentiment.

CURRENCIES: The dollar, which has steadily lost ground most of this year, was trading at 112.00 yen on Wednesday, down from 112.07 late Tuesday. The euro rose to \$1.1544 from \$1.1543. It hasn't been this strong compared to the dollar since early 2015.

ENERGY: Benchmark U.S. crude added lost 5 cents to \$46.35 a barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. It gained 38 cents to \$46.40 a barrel on Tuesday. Brent crude, the international standard, slipped 6 cents to \$48.78 per barrel. It rose 42 cents to \$48.84 a barrel in London.

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, July 19, the 200th day of 2017. There are 165 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On July 19, 1961, TWA became the first airline to begin showing in-flight movies on a regular basis as it presented "By Love Possessed" to first-class passengers on a flight from New York to Los Angeles.

On this date:

In 1553, King Henry VIII's daughter Mary was proclaimed Queen of England after pretender Lady Jane Grey was deposed.

In 1848, a pioneering women's rights convention convened in Seneca Falls, New York.

In 1903, the first Tour de France was won by Maurice Garin.

In 1941, Britain launched its "V for Victory" campaign during World War II.

In 1944, the Democratic national convention convened in Chicago with the nomination of President Franklin D. Roosevelt considered a certainty.

In 1952, the Summer Olympics opened in Helsinki, Finland.

In 1967, the movie "Up the Down Staircase," an adaptation of the Bel Kaufman novel starring Sandy Dennis as an idealistic schoolteacher, opened in Los Angeles.

In 1979, the Nicaraguan capital of Managua fell to Sandinista guerrillas, two days after President Anastasio Somoza fled the country.

In 1980, the Moscow Summer Olympics began, minus dozens of nations that were boycotting the games because of the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan.

In 1989, 111 people were killed when United Air Lines Flight 232, a DC-10 which suffered the uncontained failure of its tail engine and the loss of hydraulic systems, crashed while making an emergency landing at Sioux City, Iowa; 185 other people survived.

In 1990, President George H.W. Bush joined former presidents Ronald Reagan, Gerald R. Ford and Richard M. Nixon at ceremonies dedicating the Nixon Library and Birthplace (since redesignated the Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum) in Yorba Linda, California.

In 1992, anti-Mafia prosecutor Paolo Borsellino was killed along with five members of his security detail in a car bombing in Palermo, Sicily.

Ten years ago: A federal judge dismissed a lawsuit brought by former CIA operative Valerie Plame, who was demanding money from Bush administration officials she blamed for leaking her agency identity. Taliban gunmen abducted 23 South Koreans who worked at an aid organization in Kandahar, Afghanistan. (Two hostages were shot to death; the rest were later freed.) "Mad Men," a cable TV series about a New York advertising agency, premiered on AMC.

Five years ago: A controversy pitting gay rights against religious freedom began as a cake shop owner in Lakewood, Colorado, refused to make a wedding cake for a same-sex couple; the case has since reached the U.S. Supreme Court, which has agreed to hear arguments. Omar Suleiman (OH'-mahr SOO'-lay-mahn), 76, Egypt's former spy chief, died in Cleveland, Ohio. Sylvia Woods, 86, founder of the famed soul food

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restaurant in New York's Harlem district that carries her name, died in Mount Vernon, New York.

One year ago: Republicans meeting in Cleveland nominated Donald Trump as their presidential standard-bearer; in brief videotaped remarks, Trump thanked the delegates, saying: "This is a movement, but we have to go all the way." Writer-director Garry Marshall, 81, whose deft touch with comedy and romance led to a string of TV hits that included "Happy Days" and "Laverne & Shirley" and the box-office successes "Pretty Woman" and "Runaway Bride," died in Burbank, California.

Today's Birthdays: Actress Helen Gallagher is 91. Country singer Sue Thompson is 91. Singer Vikki Carr is 77. Blues singer-musician Little Freddie King is 77. Country singer-musician Commander Cody is 73. Actor George Dzundza is 72. Rock singer-musician Alan Gorrie (Average White Band) is 71. International Tennis Hall of Famer Ilie Nastase is 71. Rock musician Brian May is 70. Rock musician Bernie Leadon is 70. Actress Beverly Archer is 69. Movie director Abel Ferrara is 66. Actor Peter Barton is 61. Rock musician Kevin Haskins (Love and Rockets; Bauhaus) is 57. Movie director Atom Egoyan is 57. Actor Campbell Scott is 56. Actor Anthony Edwards is 55. Country singer Kelly Shiver is 54. Actress Clea Lewis is 52. Percussionist Evelyn Glennie is 52. Country musician Jeremy Patterson is 47. Classical singer Urs Buhler (Il Divo) is 46. Actor Andrew Kavovit is 46. Rock musician Jason McGerr (Death Cab for Cutie) is 43. Actor Benedict Cumberbatch is 41. Actress Erin Cummings is 40. TV chef Marcela Valladolid is 39. Actor Jared Padalecki is 35. Actor Trai Byers is 34. Actor Steven Anthony Lawrence is 27.

Thought for Today: "I want to live my life, not record it." — Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, American first lady (1929-1994).