

Groton Daily Independent

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State Jr. Legion Tournament Locke-Karst Field, Groton

10 a.m.: Lennox vs. Claremont/Britton
30 minutes later: Redfield vs. Wessington Springs
5 p.m.: Winner vs. WIN
30 minutes later: Groton vs. Mission

Friday, Aug. 4

Senior Menu: Baked fish, baked potato, 3-bean salad, peach cobbler, whole wheat bread.

Olive Grove: Wine on 9, 6 p.m.

Sunday, Aug. 6

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship at 9 a.m.

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

Monday, Aug. 7

Official Notices

Brown County (Updated 7-26)
Groton City Book (updated 7-26)
Groton Area School (updated 7-26)
Frederick Area School Book (updated 7-26)
Westport Town Book (updated 7-26)
Frederick Town (updated 7-18)
Other Official Notices Book
Claremont Town Official Notices 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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Harry Implement
"Family Owned & Operated Since 1935!"




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Ferney

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*"The world is round and the place
which may seem like the
end may also be only
the beginning."*

Ivy Baker Priest

*Chicken Soup
for the Soul*

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Royalty

We are excited to announce that we have five candidates for 4-H Queen and one candidate for 4-H King this year! Brianna Goldade, Mckenzie Hassebroek, Peyton Lynn Johnson, Megan Malsam, Hannah Sumption, and Dylan Frey are the Royalty candidates for the 2017 Brown County Fair. The crowning of the royalty will be on Thursday, August 17th, 2017 at 6:00pm in the Ken's tent. Candidates will need to report to the Ken's tent at 5:45pm.



Dylan Frey has been in 4-H for 9 years and is a member of the Friendly Fellows & Daises Club. He has participated in Dairy Cattle and Citizen Washington Focus Trip.



Peyton Lynn Johnson has been in 4-H for 7 years and is a member of the Dream Ranchers Club. She has been involved in Special Foods and Public Presentation projects.



Brianna Goldade has been in 4-H for 5 years and is a member of the Dakota Sharpshooters. She is active in the Archery and Dog project area.



Megan Malsam has been part of 4-H for the past 7 years and is a member of Dakota Sharpshooters Club. In 4-H, Megan is part of the Horse Pony and Rabbit project areas.



McKenzie Hassebroek has been part of 4-H for 7 years and is a member Rural Laid's & Lassies Club. McKenzie has been involved in the Poultry & Eggs and the Livestock Judging project.



Hannah Sumption has been part of 4-H for 9 years and is a member of the Three River Ranchers. Hannah is active in the Swine and Prospect Calf project.

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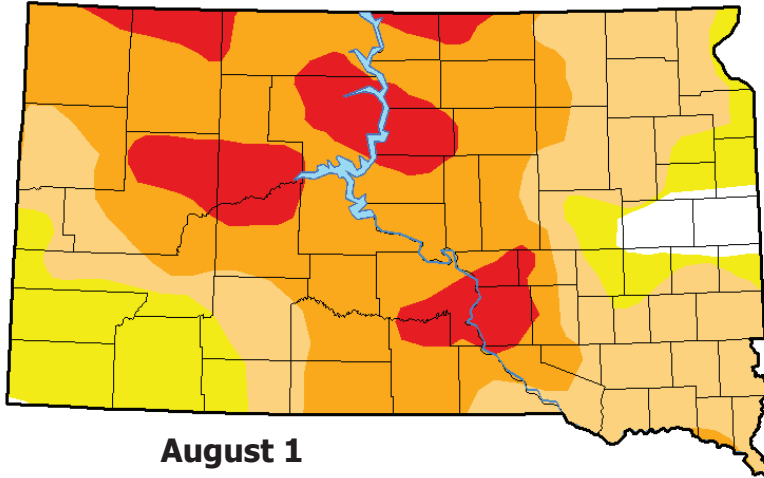
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Drought Monitor

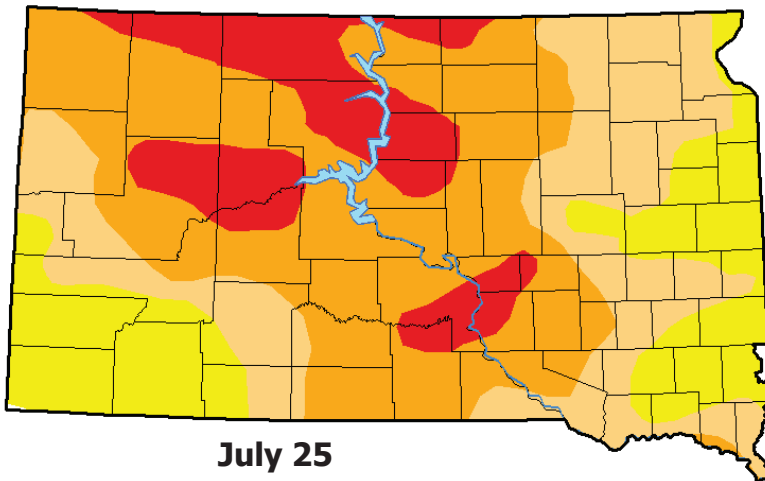
Scattered showers in the Plains brought drought relief to a few isolated locations and merely stalled the deterioration in others. In North Dakota, temperatures in excess of 5 degrees above normal, combined with a continued lack of rainfall led to an expansion of abnormally dry, moderate drought, and severe drought in the east. A one category improvement, from severe to moderate drought, was made over the south-central part of the state near the South Dakota border in response to locally heavy rainfall that improved many of the drought indicators including stream flow, soil moisture, and evaporative demand. However, impacts to vegetation are generally set with the rainfall having come too late in the season to improve things. Conditions in the remainder of the state remain unchanged. USDA reports nearly three-quarters of the state's topsoil is short to very short and reports of agricultural impacts are widespread. North Dakota Governor Doug Burgum has declared a drought disaster for most of the state.

In South Dakota, two weeks of localized rainfall brought a mixture of improvements and degradations to the eastern half of the state. Moderate drought was reduced slightly in central South Dakota and a one-category improvement was made near the east-central border where reports of 12 inches of rainfall fell. The southeastern part of the state missed out on the heavy rains. Leading to the expansion of moderate drought into the area. The western part of the state remained status quo.

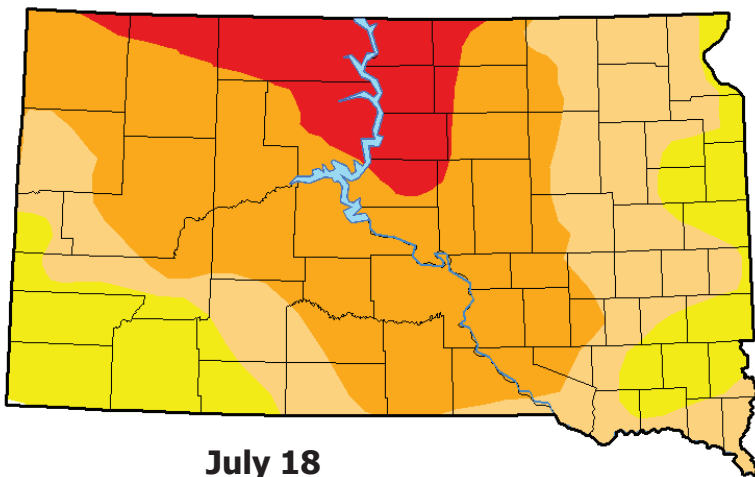
As with the Dakotas, patchy rainfall also occurred in Nebraska and Kansas. Nebraska saw a small reduction in abnormal dryness in the east-central part of the state where locally 3-5 inches were reported last week. Kansas saw a reduction in abnormally dry conditions in the southwest part of the state and an increase in the southeast.



August 1



July 25



July 18

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Highway 12 is fully reopened!

US Highway 12 going through Groton was fully reopened yesterday. The signal lights have been taken down as they are not long enough to control two lanes of traffic and a turning lane. Muth Electric is working on installing the new permanent signal lights.

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Today in Weather History

August 4, 1960: At Draper in Jones County, three-inch hail caused substantial damage to roofs, building windows and automobiles. Losses estimated at 100,000 dollars. About 1,000 chickens and turkeys killed on nearby farms.

August 4, 2000: Tennis ball size hail along with high winds caused a lot of damage throughout Selby. Many east and north windows were broken along with many vehicle's windshields. Also, many cars were dented, house siding was damaged, gardens were destroyed, and many acres of crops around Selby were destroyed. Softball hail broke windows and caused extensive damage to a few vehicles and homes west of Faulkton. Baseball size hail and high winds had broken out about every window on all of the buildings at the Brentwood Colony in Edmunds County. The large hail and strong winds also damaged many of the buildings.

1882 - A vivid aurora was visible from Oregon to Maine, down the east coast as far as Mayport FL, and inland as far as Wellington KS. Observers at Louisville KY noted merry dancers across the sky, and observers at Saint Vincent, MN, noted it was probably the most brilliant ever seen at that location. (The Weather Channel)

1930 - The temperature at Moorefield, WV, soared to 112 degrees to establish a state record, having reached 110 degrees the previous day. Widespread drought after April of that year caused some towns to haul water for domestic use, and many manufacturing plants were barely operational. (The Weather Channel)

1961 - Spokane, WA, reached an all-time record high of 108 degrees. Kalispell, MT, set an all-time record with a reading of 105 degrees. (The Weather Channel)

1980 - A record forty-two consecutive days of 100 degree heat finally came to an end at the Dallas-Fort Worth Airport. July 1980 proved to be the hottest month of record with a mean temperature of 92 degrees. There was just one day of rain in July, and there was no measurable rain in August. There were 18 more days of 100 degree heat in August, and four in September. Hot weather that summer contributed to the deaths of 1200 people nationally, and losses from the heat across the country were estimated at twenty billion dollars. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1987 - A cold front brought relief from the heat to a large part of the Midwest, while hot weather continued in the south central and eastern U.S. Morning thunderstorms in Nebraska deluged the town of Dalton with 8.71 inches of rain, along with hail three inches in diameter, which accumulated up to four feet deep near the town of Dix. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather from eastern Iowa to Lower Michigan during the afternoon and evening hours, producing golf ball size hail and spawning several tornadoes. A thunderstorm at Maquoketa, IA, produced wind gusts to 75 mph. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)




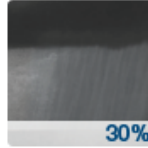

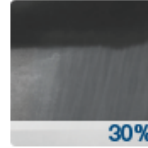

1989 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather from eastern Nebraska and northeastern Kansas to the Great Lakes Region, with 150 reports of large hail or damaging winds during the afternoon, evening, and nighttime hours. Thunderstorms produced tennis ball size hail at Claremont, MN, and wind gusts to 75 mph at Milwaukee, WI. Thunderstorms representing what once was Hurricane Chantal produced five inches of rain at Grant, MI, and deluged Chicago, IL, with more than three inches of rain in three hours. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

2008: Severe storms moved across northern Illinois and Indiana with tornadoes and stiff winds reported. With tornado sirens blaring, the game at Wrigley Field between Cubs and Astros was stopped as fans were told to evacuate to the lower concourse. Passengers at O'Hare International Airport were evacuated to lower levels of buildings as well. An estimated 350 flights were cancelled.





2009: The strongest tornado to hit Quebec since the same date in 1994 ripped through Mont-Laurier. The F2 tornado tore through the small western Quebec town severely damaging about 40 homes. Two men were taken to the hospital with minor injuries..

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Today	Tonight	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday
						
Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Partly Sunny then Chance Showers	Chance Showers	Chance Showers	Chance Showers	Sunny
High: 78 °F	Low: 53 °F	High: 76 °F	Low: 55 °F	High: 74 °F	Low: 53 °F	High: 77 °F

Cool and Unsettled Through the Weekend and Beyond

Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
			
Highs: 75-83 F	Lows: 50-60 F Highs: 72-80 F	Lows: 52-58 F Highs: 70-78 F	Lows: 50-58 F Highs: 75-80 F

National Weather Service – Aberdeen, SD

Created: 8/4/2017 5:47 AM

 [US National Weather Service Aberdeen SD](https://www.facebook.com/USNationalWeatherServiceAberdeenSD)
 [@NWSAberdeen](https://twitter.com/NWSAberdeen)

Published on: 08/04/2017 at 5:52AM

Unseasonably cool air and partly cloudy skies are expected today, but scattered thunderstorms look to move in for the weekend. Heads up if you have outdoor plans! An isolated storm may become strong Saturday across central SD.

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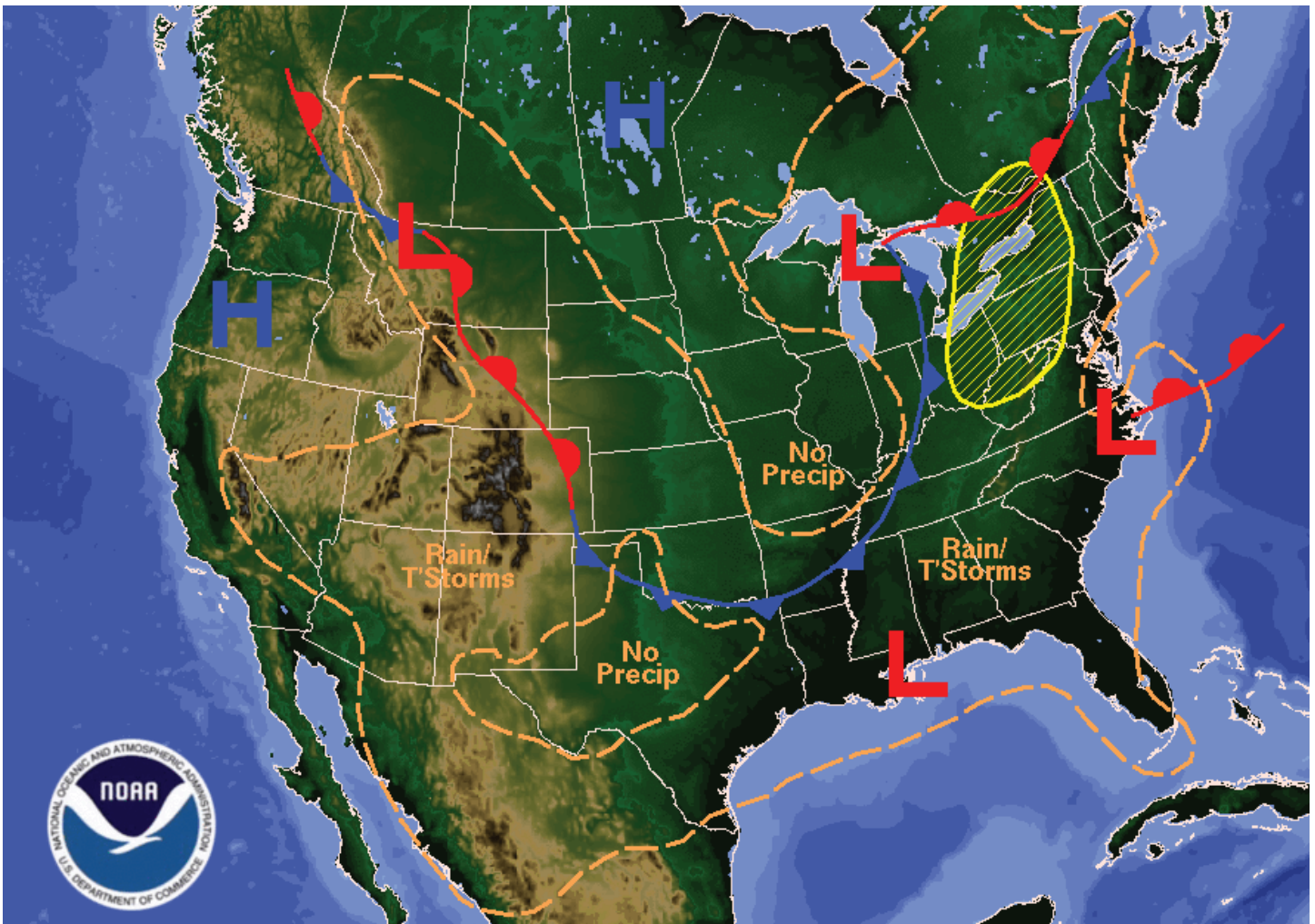
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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 71.6 F at 5:52 PM
Low Outside Temp: 55.4 F at 4:47 AM
High Gust: 20.0 Mph at 9:43 AM
Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 107° in 1934
Record Low: 47° in 1978
Average High: 84°F
Average Low: 59°F
Average Precip in Aug: 0.31
Precip to date in Aug: 0.78
Average Precip to date: 14.17
Precip Year to Date: 8.13
Sunset Tonight: 8:57 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:22 a.m.



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Fri, Aug 04, 2017, issued 4:35 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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LAST WORDS

The uncertainties of life always end with the certainty of death. We know it is there waiting for us. No one knows when their heart will stop. Yet, when the time comes, most individuals have a few last words.

Cardinal Borgia said, "I have provided in the course of my life for everything except death, and now, alas, I am to die unprepared."

Tony Hancock, a British comedian said, "No one will even know I existed. Nothing to leave behind me. Nothing to pass on. Nobody to mourn me. That's the bitterest blow of all."

Elizabeth the First: "All my possessions for one moment of time."

Phillip III, King of France: "What an account I shall have to give God. How I should like to live otherwise than I have lived."

Voltaire, a religious skeptic said, "In twenty years Christianity will be no more. My single hand shall destroy the edifice it took twelve apostles to rear." Some years later, Voltaire's house was used by the Geneva Bible Society to print Bibles.

When Jesus died the words of Psalm 31:5 were on his lips, "Into Your hands, Father, I commit my spirit." As He was ending His life's work, hanging upon His cross and dying for our sins, He declared His faith, hope, trust and confidence in His Father. There was no fear, no regret, and no questions about life or death. Only the assurance that His spirit was in His Father's hands.

Prayer: Father, may we face life and death, as Jesus did, knowing that we are secure because we trust in You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 31:5 Into your hands I commit my spirit; deliver me, LORD, my faithful God.

News from the Associated Press

Sioux Falls to push for more minorities in specialty schools

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The Sioux Falls School District is looking for ways to give minority students more access to programs at its specialty schools, which are majority white.

District board members looked at each of the district's three specialty schools on Wednesday, assessing demographics and setting a goal to promote the schools to more diverse groups. The specialty programs include education in the fine arts, Spanish or learning with the students' parents alongside them.

"It is a challenge, for sure," Board President Kate Parker said. "I think if you looked at other school districts, they probably have similar challenges."

More than 30 percent of the students in Sioux Falls public schools are non-white, but they make up less than 20 percent of students in specialty schools, the Argus Leader reported .

The board hopes the demographics at those schools will better resemble the overall student population this year, when the district adds three computer science immersion schools.

All three of the schools implementing the program — Anne Sullivan, Hayward and Lowell Elementary — are Title I schools, meaning they receive additional federal funding due to high numbers of students from low-income families. The schools also have more racially diverse students than the district average.

All-City Elementary School is the least racially diverse school in the city, with 94 percent of students identifying as white.

Parker said one solution could come from making information about specialty schools more readily available. But the district will also have to look at why the lack of diversity exists in the first place, including whether it's lack of transportation, lack of awareness or something else.

Parker said another option could be expanding space in the programs to fit more students.

"If we're really serious about equity and access, if we really believe that non-white students have the same gifted-ness as white students ... I think we have to look at expansion," Superintendent Brian Maher said.

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

2 more defendants plead guilty in casino blackjack scheme

ABERDEEN, S.D. (AP) — Two more defendants have admitted to playing roles in a blackjack scheme that authorities say involved the theft of \$10,000 from a casino in the northeast region of South Dakota.

Lito Bolocon, 44, and Jordan Rondell, 29, both pleaded guilty this week in federal court to conspiracy, the Aberdeen American News reported .

Four people were indicted in the case in February, including Jeremy Brown, then 42, who pleaded guilty in May to conspiracy. Fern Gill, then 52, has pleaded not guilty and is scheduled for trial later this month.

Court documents show Brown and Gill were blackjack dealers at the Dakota Sioux Casino near Watertown. Rondell was a card player, and Bolocon supervised the blackjack area.

Authorities said Brown and Gill payed Rondell for bets on losing hands on Dec. 31, 2015, and Jan. 1, 2016. Bolocon is accused of knowingly allowing the payouts.

Each was originally charged with conspiracy, theft by an employee of a gaming establishment on Indian land, and aiding and abetting.

Brown's sentencing is scheduled for Sept. 1. Bolocon and Rondell are expected to be sentenced in November.

Conspiracy has a maximum penalty of five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

The Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate tribe operates the casino, which sits on the Lake Traverse Indian Reservation.

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

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Last of 3 defendants pleads guilty in Minnesota meth case

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — The last of three defendants charged in a large methamphetamine trafficking case in Minnesota has pleaded guilty.

Federal authorities say Luis Sanchez-Lopez pleaded guilty Thursday to conspiracy to possess with intent to deliver more than 100 pounds of meth. Abraham Suazo and Arturo Juarez-Madrigo pleaded guilty earlier this year.

Court documents show that the South Dakota State Patrol in February pulled over a vehicle driven by Suazo that contained about 92 pounds of methamphetamine. It is believed to be the largest single seizure of meth headed for Minnesota this year.

Arthur Martinez, Sanchez-Lopez's attorney, says it's a "sad situation" and he looks forward to the sentencing hearing so he can explain his client's involvement.

Attorneys for the other two men did not immediately respond to email requests for comment.

Drought spreads and intensifies across US Northern Plains

By MATT VOLZ, Associated Press

HELENA, Mont. (AP) — The drought plaguing eastern Montana and much of North and South Dakota came on quickly and is intensifying, leading ranchers to sell their cattle and farmers to harvest early whatever crops that have grown so far this summer.

Just three months ago, no areas of moderate drought were recorded in the Northern Plains region by the U.S. Drought Monitor at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. But July's soaring temperatures and lack of rain quickly parched the soil and dried up waterways, creating what climatologists call a "flash drought."

Now, 62 percent of North Dakota, more than half of South Dakota and 40 percent of Montana are in severe, extreme or exceptional drought, according to the drought monitor's weekly report released Thursday. There are also pockets of drought in the Southern Plain states of Nebraska, Iowa, Oklahoma and Texas.

In Montana, 12 percent of the state's land is experiencing "exceptional drought," meaning widespread crop and pasture losses and water-shortage emergencies, mainly in the northeastern part of the state.

"We would expect to see conditions that bad once or twice in 100 years," said Deborah Bathke, a climatologist at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's National Drought Mitigation Center and a co-author of the drought monitor.

The effect has been devastating on farmers and ranchers. Farmers are harvesting beans, peas and lentils two or three weeks earlier than normal, with a yield of about half of what they see in a normal year, said Lola Raska of the Montana Grain Growers Association.

Wheat crop yields are even worse, coming in at about a third of normal, she said.

"A lot of wheat prices are still very low," Raska said. "That, in addition to low yields, is going to have a ripple effect throughout the entire economy."

Jay Bodner of the Montana Stockgrowers Association said the extreme drought means ranchers are running out of pasture and water. They are reducing their herds by selling older cows and weaning and shipping young calves early.

It could take years for ranchers to build their herds back up, meaning extended economic losses, Bodner said.

"These high temperatures in July deteriorated things really quickly," he said. "We typically don't see those severe conditions."

The region saw more than 20 days in July with temperatures exceeded 90 degrees, according to the National Weather Service. Rainfall for the month ranged from trace amounts in eastern Montana's Miles City to 1.68 inches (4.27 centimeters) in Bismarck, North Dakota.

Half of Montana's 1.5 million head of cattle are in drought areas, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. U.S. government officials have opened more federal land to grazing and water is being trucked in, but those are temporary fixes, Bodner said.

The drought also made the land more vulnerable to wildfires. Montana's largest fire devastated more than 420 square miles of farm and rangeland in eastern Montana, compounding the problems for growers in the region.

The outlook is grim with the National Weather Service's Climate Prediction Center's predicting the drought will last into the fall, with higher-than-normal temperatures and low precipitation expected.

That could force farmers to delay fall planting and ranchers to make more cattle reductions.

"If these conditions persist well into the fall, it will have ramifications of some more magnitude," Bodner said.

South Dakota governor launches initiative on workforce

By JAMES NORD, Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Difficulty finding qualified employees is a major constraint on business growth nationwide, Gov. Dennis Daugaard said Thursday while launching a multi-state workforce development initiative meant to help address the issue.

The South Dakota Republican chose workforce as the central policy focus of his year-long chairmanship of the Western Governors' Association. He said the initiative's goal is to improve career opportunities for students, graduates and displaced workers.

"Things are going well in South Dakota, but still we do have some challenges, and we do have opportunities to improve," Daugaard said. "Finding workforce is the key problem that's faced by employers."

Daugaard in June was elected chairman of the Western Governors' Association, which is made up of 19 states and 3 U.S.-flag islands.

Daugaard said officials would share best practices, collect data and try to learn from each other ways to address the "skills gap" at a series of workshops in several states. He launched the push at a Thursday workshop in Sioux Falls that featured U.S. Labor Secretary Alexander Acosta, who said the country has nearly 6 million job openings that are going unfilled.

He said that education and business need to communicate so that education can focus on skills that lead to jobs. Acosta asked the western states to participate in two initiatives President Donald Trump's administration is pursuing to boost apprenticeships and address what Acosta called "excessive" professional licensing.

Acosta said there are many opportunities available outside of the four-year college system such as associates degrees and vocational education.

"We need great mechanics just like we need great doctors. We need great carpenters just like we need great lawyers," Acosta said. "Many well-paying careers are available to those without a college degree."

On licensing, Acosta said the cost and complexity creates an economic barrier for Americans seeking a job. He said unnecessary licenses should be eliminated and needed ones should be streamlined.

Drought conditions in South Dakota stable over past week

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Drought conditions in South Dakota have remained relatively stable over the past week.

The latest U.S. Drought Monitor map shows 82 percent of the state in some stage of drought, up slightly from 80 percent last week.

Pockets of extreme drought make up about 13 percent of the state, down from 15 percent. The worst areas are in central and western South Dakota.

There are still no areas of exceptional drought in the state, as there are in neighboring North Dakota.

Farmers and ranchers in several counties are eligible for aid due to disaster declarations in the Dakotas by the federal government.

Montana woman charged in Summerset homicide

SUMMERSET, S.D. (AP) — A Montana woman has been charged with murder in the death of a Summerset woman.

Court documents say 38-year-old Stormy Gayle Marsh is accused of killing 49-year-old Phyllis Mastin who was found dead in her mobile home early Wednesday.

KOTA-TV (<http://bit.ly/2vwL5pr>) reports the court records say Mastin had been stabbed several times and that a knife and gun were found under her body. Police say they found Marsh at a Rapid City motel with the victim's car and cell phone.

Marsh told investigators that Mastin's ex-boyfriend had been in the mobile home, that the three of them got into a physical fight and that Mastin told her to leave. It was not immediately clear if Marsh had a defense attorney.

Information from: KOTA-TV, <http://www.kotatv.com>

Authorities ID third victim of Rapid City mobile home fire

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — The Pennington County Sheriff's Office has identified the last of three people who died in a mobile home fire in Rapid City.

Authorities say 52-year-old Thomas Milner was identified through DNA testing.

Nine-year-old Landon Gayton and 37-year-old Kelli Archer were identified earlier this week through fingerprints and dental records.

Preliminary autopsy results indicate all three died of smoke inhalation during the fire last Friday.

The cause of the fire is still being investigated.

Official accused of stealing from tribe reaches plea deal

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — An official accused of stealing from the Oglala Sioux tribe is scheduled to plead guilty to a reduced charge in a deal with prosecutors.

Fifty-seven-year-old Charles Cummings, of Martin, is accused of stealing from the tribe while serving as a district vice chairman.

Cummings pleaded not guilty in federal court earlier this month to theft and embezzlement charges that carried a maximum punishment of five years in prison.

The Rapid City Journal reports Cummings is scheduled to plead guilty Friday to a misdemeanor that's punishable by up to a year in prison. The plea agreement also calls for him to repay \$2,500.

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

South Dakota Patrol reimbursed for pipeline protest duty

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota has been paid for its help policing protests in North Dakota against the Dakota Access oil pipeline.

South Dakota Highway Patrol troopers racked up 8,800 hours during the protests. Spokesman Tony Mangan tells the Argus Leader that the agency has been reimbursed \$518,000 for hours and mileage.

American Indian tribes and environmental groups protested the pipeline because they fear environmental harm, a claim Texas-based pipeline developer Energy Transfer Partners rejects. There were 761 arrests in North Dakota between August and February.

The \$3.8 billion pipeline began moving North Dakota oil to a distribution point in Illinois last month.

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

Sioux Falls man pleads guilty to federal kidnapping charge

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A Sioux Falls man has pleaded guilty in federal court to kidnapping. Sixty-one-year-old Jon Bryant Sr. was accused of forcefully taking a vehicle from a woman and then forcing the victim into the trunk, and seriously injuring her.

U.S. Attorney Randolph Seiler says Bryant's motive in the October incident was revenge, and that Bryant took the victim across state lines before being caught.

Bryant faces up to life in prison when he's sentenced Oct. 23.

Flynn files new financial form reporting ties to data firm

By CHAD DAY and STEPHEN BRAUN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's former national security adviser, Michael Flynn, is revealing a brief advisory role with a firm related to a controversial data analysis company that aided the Trump campaign, The Associated Press has learned.

The disclosure of Flynn's link to Cambridge Analytica will come in an amended public financial filing in which the retired U.S. Army lieutenant general also discloses income that includes payments from the Trump transition team, according to a person close to Flynn who spoke to AP on condition of anonymity Thursday to describe details of the filing made to the White House.

The amended disclosure shows that just before the end of the campaign, Flynn entered into a consulting agreement with SCL Group, a Virginia-based company related to Cambridge Analytica, the data mining and analysis firm that worked with Trump's campaign.

The person said Flynn didn't perform work or accept payment as part of the agreement with SCL Group. The details of Flynn's role with SCL weren't fully laid out, the person said, noting that Flynn terminated his involvement shortly after Trump won the presidency.

Cambridge Analytica was heavily funded by the family of Robert Mercer, a hedge fund manager who also backed the campaign and other conservative candidates and causes. Cambridge Analytica also worked for the successful pro-Brexit campaign in 2016 to pull Britain out of the European Union. Trump administration chief strategist Steve Bannon was a vice president of Cambridge Analytica before he joined the Trump campaign.

Democratic lawmakers and Trump critics have seized on Cambridge Analytica's role as they've pushed congressional investigators to scrutinize the Trump campaign's data operation as part of probes into Russia's interference in the 2016 election.

Flynn's previous filing, submitted to the White House and Office of Government Ethics in March, listed at least \$1.3 million in earnings, including between \$50,000 and \$100,000 from his consulting company, Flynn Intel Group Inc. The latest filing lists at least \$1.8 million in income.

Flynn's amended filing comes some six months after he was ousted from the White House for misleading the vice president about conversations he had with the then-Russian ambassador to the U.S. It also comes as Special Counsel Robert Mueller and congressional committees are scrutinizing Flynn's business deals and foreign connections.

The person close to Flynn said he is disclosing the information in an amended filing to make sure the "public record is accurate and transparent." The person noted that Flynn and his legal team have spent months piecing together the information necessary for the filing without the assistance of the White House counsel's office or the Office of Government Ethics.

In the filing, Flynn reports earning about \$28,000 from the Trump presidential transition and more than \$5,000 as a consultant to an aborted plan to build nuclear power plants across the Middle East. The consulting connection with a group of companies involved in the power plant proposal had been disclosed in Flynn's previous filing, but it had not indicated that he had received payment.

Flynn's new filing also provided more details about his consulting work for NJK Holding Corporation, a firm headed by Iranian-American multi-millionaire Nasser Kazeminy. The filing shows that Flynn was paid more than \$140,000 for his roles as adviser and consultant to Minneapolis-based NJK.

Flynn also served as vice chairman at GreenZone Systems, a tech firm funded by NJK and headed by Bijan Kian, who was Flynn's business partner in Flynn Intel Group, a consulting firm that was active last year but is now defunct. Flynn Intel is now under scrutiny by federal authorities and congressional investigators for its role in research and lobbying work for a Turkish businessman tied to the government of Turkey.

In a statement to the AP, NJK said Flynn "played an advisory role to NJK Holding relative to its investment interests in security." The firm added that in his roles with NJK and GreenZone, Flynn "provided his counsel and guidance on public sector business opportunities for secure communications technology within the U.S. Department of Defense" and with other agencies.

NJK said Kian has no current involvement with NJK or GreenZone.

Earlier Thursday, Rep. Elijah Cummings, D-Md., the ranking Democrat on the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, asked Kian for documents detailing Flynn's foreign business contacts and travel. Flynn listed Kian as a personal reference in 2016 during his effort to renew his military security clearance. Kian told military investigators that Flynn had several foreign business contacts, but Flynn did not provide any of those contacts to investigators, Cummings said.

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AP source: Mueller turns to DC grand jury in Russia probe

By CHAD DAY and ERIC TUCKER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Special Counsel Robert Mueller is using a grand jury in Washington as part of an investigation into potential coordination between the Trump campaign and Russia, a person familiar with the probe says.

The use of a grand jury, a standard prosecution tool in criminal investigations, suggests that Mueller and his team of investigators are likely to hear from witnesses and demand documents in the coming weeks and months.

The person who confirmed to The Associated Press that Mueller had turned to a grand jury was not authorized to discuss the investigation by name and spoke on condition of anonymity.

The Wall Street Journal first reported the use of a grand jury.

Grand juries are common vehicles to subpoena witnesses and records and to present evidence, though they do not suggest any criminal charges are near or will necessarily be sought. It was not immediately clear how or whether the Washington grand jury was connected to the work of a separate one in Alexandria, Virginia. That panel has been used to gather information on Michael Flynn, Trump's former national security adviser.

A spokesman for Mueller's team did not return an email seeking comment.

"We won. Move on!" Trump demanded in a tweet posted early Friday, a day after he leveled a host of broadsides against Democrats and investigators at a rally in Huntington, West Virginia.

Mueller's reliance on a grand jury is the "logical next step in this investigation" given that it's the traditional method for prosecutors to gather evidence, said Washington defense lawyer Jacob Frenkel.

"The use of the grand jury neither escalates, nor establishes a timeline for, the investigation," he added.

President Donald Trump, during an appearance Thursday evening at a rally in Huntington, W.Va., challenged Democrats to either continue their "obsession with a hoax" or begin serving the interests of the American people.

"I just hope the final determination is a truly honest one," he said, "which is what the millions of people who gave us our big win in November deserve and what all Americans who want a better future want and deserve."

Lawyers for Trump said earlier they were unaware of the existence of a grand jury and had no information to suggest the president himself was under federal investigation.

"With respect to the news of the federal grand jury, I have no reason to believe that the president is under investigation," defense attorney John Dowd told the AP.

Ty Cobb, special counsel to the president, said he wasn't aware Mueller had started using a new grand jury.

"Grand jury matters are typically secret," Cobb said. "The White House favors anything that accelerates the conclusion of his work fairly. ... The White House is committed to fully cooperating with Mr. Mueller."

It was not clear what witnesses might appear before the grand jury or what evidence it might be accumulating or presented with.

Though there is "considerable deference to the prosecutors and their recommendations" when it comes to a grand jury, "the mere fact of presenting evidence to the grand jury does not obligate prosecutors in any way to ask them to return an indictment," Frenkel said.

Mueller, who worked as a prosecutor in Washington before becoming FBI director, was appointed special counsel in May by the Justice Department following the firing by Trump of FBI Director James Comey. He has since assembled a team of more than a dozen investigators, including current and former Justice Department prosecutors with experience in international bribery, organized crime and financial fraud.

News of the grand jury came as senators introduced two bipartisan bills aimed at protecting Mueller from being fired by Trump, with both parties signaling resistance to any White House effort to derail the investigation into Russian meddling in last year's election.

Trump's defense team has been looking into potential conflicts of interest among members of Mueller's team, such as past political contributions to Democrats including Hillary Clinton, and Trump has warned that any effort by Mueller to look into his finances would fall outside the scope of Mueller's appointment.

Under the regulations, Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein is the government official empowered to fire Mueller under limited circumstances, such as conflict of interest and dereliction of duty. Rosenstein, who appointed Mueller, has publicly said he has seen no basis for firing him.

Trump attorney Jay Sekulow told Fox News on Thursday that "the president is not thinking about firing Robert Mueller so the speculation that's out there is just incorrect."

He also downplayed the significance of the grand jury, calling it "a standard operating procedure when you've got a situation like this."

Associated Press writer Stephen Braun and Mary Clare Jalonick contributed to this report.

Follow Chad Day on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/ChadSDay> and Eric Tucker at <http://www.twitter.com/etuckerAP>

Employer-based health coverage likely to stay awhile

By LAURIE KELLMAN and JOYCE M. ROSENBERG, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Get your insurance through your employer? The ongoing political turmoil around "Obamacare" all but guarantees you'll still be able to do that.

Ask Walt Rowen, whose business is etching glass but whose experience managing century-old, family-owned Susquehanna Glass makes him something of an expert on health care. He's provided coverage to employees, then canceled it, steering them to the health insurance exchange. But with those premiums rising, Rowen this year is again covering his 70 or so workers under the umbrella of employer-sponsored health insurance.

Employer-provided health insurance is so ingrained in the American workplace that people expect it to continue even as politicians thrash out the role of government in health care. That's according to polling, business owners and consumers. And in a nearly saturated labor market, employers don't want to give workers a reason to work somewhere else.

"I think a company — any size company — would be incredibly afraid to just cancel its insurance policy and say the hell with it," says Rowen, whose company is located in Columbia, Pennsylvania. He said that could result in employees fleeing, especially in states where the Affordable Care Act insurance markets are weak.

With the GOP crusade to repeal and replace "Obamacare" failing, the federal mandates that people

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have insurance and that employers with more than 50 workers provide it seem likely to stay in place in the foreseeable future. The Trump administration on Tuesday pledged to keep working with Congress on a rewrite. "Obamacare's mandates saddled many with health care costs they simply couldn't afford," said White House spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders.

For now, the Trump administration is considering whether or not to continue paying the law's cost-sharing subsidies, which have helped lower premiums. Without those subsidies, it's estimated that premiums will rise and insurers will leave markets.

The ACA requires companies with 50 or more full-time employees to provide insurance to employees and their dependents. The Kaiser Family Foundation says nearly 96 percent of companies of that size already were offering coverage before the law took effect in 2014. Nearly 35 percent of companies with fewer than 50 workers also were offering insurance.

Removing the employer mandate wouldn't sit well with a wide swath of the American public.

A poll by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research says 61 percent oppose revoking the requirement, including 58 percent of Republicans.

Workers have been getting their health insurance through their employers for decades, since the U.S. government exempted employer-paid health benefits from wage controls and income tax during World War II.

Nearly 90 percent of workers are in companies that provide health benefits, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation/HRET annual survey in 2016. Taking into account dependents, roughly half of Americans are covered by employer-based insurance.

Large companies "need to attract and retain employees and they'd be at a competitive disadvantage if they stopped offering health benefits," said William Kramer, executive director for national health policy for the Pacific Business Group on Health.

As a result, human resource consultants say it's likely that businesses will remain committed to offering coverage. Some experts question whether the ACA's employer mandate makes much, if any, difference when there's a solid business case for providing health care: With unemployment low and the labor market tight, benefits give employers an advantage in recruiting and retaining the best workers.

"What kind of message are you giving to employees if you say, 'I'm going to take this away?' Are you really willing to risk losing people?" asks David Lewis, CEO of OperationsInc, based in Norwalk, Connecticut.

Even if the employer mandate had been repealed, the Congressional Budget Office estimated that larger companies would have been hard-pressed to cancel their health benefits, although some smaller firms would have done so.

"As soon as you take it back, you cause massive employee dissatisfaction," said Jay Starkman, CEO of Engage PEO, a human resources provider whose clients include many small and mid-sized businesses.

Rowen, the glass business owner, says his health insurance decisions had less to do with the employer mandate than with cost and employee retention.

In the four years before the ACA took effect, Susquehanna Glass had fewer than 50 employees and saw its premiums rise between 15 percent and 20 percent a year. "We were fiddling all the time trying to keep our health care costs for our employees as affordable as possible," Rowen recalls.

He hired an expert to help his employees find insurance on the exchange in Pennsylvania. Lower-paid employees qualified for subsidies, while higher-paid workers could afford plans or went on their spouses' plans, he said. In some cases, Rowen gave bonuses or raises to help workers afford insurance.

He says he owed a penalty of about \$40,000 for not providing insurance — less than the six figures he thinks he would have paid to provide group insurance.

But by 2016, he said, his workers were complaining that their premiums were increasing. Susquehanna Glass by that time had grown to about 70 employees — enough to qualify for less-expensive group plans joined by medium-sized businesses. Many of his new employees were younger and less expensive to insure. He found that purchasing group health insurance would cost just over \$100,000 — not as much as he'd feared.

"If they were not able to get an affordable one with me and they found another company that does offer

one," he says, "They might be forced to make the decision to leave me."

Rosenberg reported from New York. Associated Press Writers Michael Rubinkam and Emily Swanson contributed to this story.

Follow Kellman and Rosenberg at <http://www.twitter.com/APLaurieKellman> and <http://www.twitter.com/JoyceMRosenberg>

5 things to watch in the US government's July jobs report

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER, AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — As the U.S. economic expansion enters its ninth year, Friday's jobs report should help clarify its future path after mixed signals have emerged in recent weeks.

Americans are buying homes at a healthy pace, but car sales have fallen off. Factory production is expanding modestly, but manufacturers aren't hiring much. And a report Thursday pointed to slower growth among services firms, such as retailers, banks and construction firms. Consumers also turned cautious in June and barely raised their spending compared with May.

Friday's jobs report will be issued at 8:30 a.m. Eastern time. Economists forecast that employers will add a healthy 180,000 jobs and the unemployment rate will decline to 4.3 percent, matching May's 16-year low.

Solid numbers like that would cut through the conflicting information and reinforce that the economy is in decent shape.

Here are five things to look for beyond the headline numbers:

BLACK UNEMPLOYMENT MAY HIT A RECORD LOW

In June, the African-American unemployment rate fell to 7.1 percent, the lowest in 17 years and just one-tenth of a point above its all-time low, reached in April 2000. It's possible the rate could fall again, either matching the record or setting a new one.

That progress is typical after an economy has been growing steadily, and the unemployment rate nationwide has fallen to low levels. It suggests employers are reaching beyond their usual networks and hiring more people from disadvantaged populations.

Still, the black unemployment rate is roughly twice the white rate, which was 3.8 percent in June. That's in line with historical averages. Blacks are more likely to be unemployed than whites at all education levels, a sign to most economists that discrimination in the job market still exists.

WAGE GROWTH WILL LIKELY REMAIN WEAK

Paychecks are growing at a subdued pace, which is unusual with the unemployment rate so low. That usually spurs employers to compete more for workers by offering higher wages and salaries.

Yet average hourly pay grew just 2.5 percent in June from a year earlier. The last time the unemployment rate was at 4.4 percent, pay climbed at about a 4 percent annual rate.

Analysts forecast that annual wage growth will actually slip to 2.4 percent in July. That's mostly because a spurt in pay a year ago makes a large annual gain harder to achieve.

ARE AMERICANS WORKING LONGER?

The answer to that question may seem obvious to those toiling away. But the average work-week, as measured by the government, was stable for months at 34.4 hours. In June, however, that ticked up to 34.5.

That six-minute increase, spread over the U.S. workforce of about 153 million, actually translates into a lot more work. Economists say it's the equivalent of about 300,000 more jobs.

If the work week rises again, it would suggest that employers still need more labor but can't find all the workers they need. As a result, they are pushing their existing staffs harder.

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A BIG JOB GAIN COMPLICATES THINGS

Robust hiring around 200,000 or more would be great for the economy, but it could give the Federal Reserve headaches. For months, economists have expected hiring to slow as the unemployment rate falls, leaving employers a dwindling supply of job seekers to choose from. That can act as a brake on job gains.

But if healthy hiring persists, it suggests employers are still finding plenty of workers.

Why is that a problem for the Fed? Because Fed policymakers have raised short-term interest rates three times in the past seven months, based on the idea that employers will soon have to pay more to attract workers. Higher wages can force companies to raise prices, which can lead to inflation.

The Fed has raised rates to forestall inflation. But if employers are still hiring at a strong pace, that suggests employers have plenty of workers to choose from and won't have to raise pay. Some economists argue the Fed should keep rates low so this trend can continue and more people can come off the sidelines and find work.

WHAT'S THE STATE OF MANUFACTURING JOBS?

Manufacturing output is growing modestly, but factory job growth has stalled in the past couple of months. That could undercut President Donald Trump's efforts to return manufacturing jobs to the United States.

Factories added jobs at a robust pace over the winter, including 22,000 in February, the most in a year. But they cut 2,000 in May and added just 1,000 in June. One culprit is automakers. Car sales have declined this year after reaching a record high in 2016, and many carmakers have been forced to lay off workers.

All-powerful Venezuelan assembly to open amid protests

By **FABIOLA SANCHEZ** and **CHRISTINE ARMARIO**, Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) — Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro is heading toward a showdown with his political foes, promising to seat a new constituent assembly Friday that will rewrite the country's constitution and hold powers that override all other government branches.

Leaders of the opposition urged Venezuelans to fill the streets of the capital Friday, hoping to provide a strong showing that many people object to the assembly.

The body's 545 delegates were expected to be installed at the legislative palace in a room just yards (meters) from the chamber where the opposition-controlled National Assembly meets. Maduro, who has said he will use the assembly to punish his opponents, planned to attend the opening session.

The legislature building has been the scene of bloody clashes in recent weeks and the installation of the all-powerful assembly will intensify a political struggle that has brought three months of bloody anti-government protests to Venezuela. Maduro vows the assembly will strip opposition lawmakers of their constitutional immunity from prosecution, while members of congress say they will only be removed by force.

"The only way they'll get us out of here is by killing us," declared Freddy Guevara, the National Assembly's first vice president. "They will never have the seat that the people of Venezuela gave us."

The opposition boycotted Sunday's election of the constituent assembly, arguing that the rules were rigged to benefit the government, and nearly all the candidates were supporters of Maduro's administration.

The election has come under mounting scrutiny since the CEO of an international voting technology company said that "without any doubt" the official voter turnout number had been tampered with — a charge that Maduro and the National Electoral Council have dismissed. An increasing number of foreign governments have refused to recognize the assembly and many within Venezuela fear it will create a one-party state.

"There has been a gradual erosion of democratic practice and this is a significant line that has been crossed," said Michael Shifter, president of the Washington-based think tank Inter-American Dialogue. "To attach the term democracy to Venezuela with this new constituent assembly is on very weak ground."

The U.S. State Department called the assembly illegitimate Thursday, saying the election was rigged to further entrench "the Maduro dictatorship."

"The United States will not recognize the National Constituent Assembly," spokeswoman Heath Nauert said. On the eve of the assembly's installation, the Spanish Embassy in Caracas was attacked with gasoline bombs. Prosecutors said two individuals on a motorcycle launched the devices, which started a fire but caused no reported injuries.

Carlos Romero, a professor and foreign relations analyst in Caracas, called the incident "extremely grave" and said it could further complicate relations between Venezuela and Madrid. Spain's ambassador to Venezuela was among a group of legislators who visited the National Assembly on Tuesday in a show of support after the constituent assembly election.

Prominent members of the constituent assembly, such as Diosdado Cabello, the leader of the ruling socialist party, have said they plan to target the opposition-controlled congress and the country's chief prosecutor, Luisa Ortega Diaz, a longtime supporter of the late Hugo Chavez who recently broke with Maduro. As one of its first tasks, Maduro has ordered the assembly to declare Ortega Diaz's office in a state of emergency and entirely restructure it.

In a continuing show of defiance, Ortega Diaz filed papers Thursday seeking a court order to block installation of the new assembly. The request, filed to a lower court in an apparent attempt to circumvent the government-stacked Supreme Court, was almost certain to be denied.

She also ordered prosecutors to investigate the allegations of election tampering raised by Antonio Mugica, the head of the voting technology firm Smartmatic. Mugica told reporters in London on Wednesday that results recorded by his company's systems and those reported by the National Electoral Council show the official turnout count was off by at least 1 million votes.

Pledges by opposition lawmakers to remain in power no matter what action the constituent assembly takes have opened the possibility of two governing bodies operating side by side — neither recognizing the other.

One opposition lawmaker, Henry Ramos Allup, said this week that if forcibly expelled from the legislative palace the National Assembly could potentially hold its sessions at another site.

Despite questions surrounding the vote, Maduro all but ensured there was nothing that could stop the government from seating the new assembly.

"They are bent on plowing ahead with this power grab," Shifter said, "and this is not going to stand in the way."

Associated Press writer Fabiola Sanchez reported this story in Caracas and AP writer Christine Armario reported from Bogota, Colombia.

Fabiola Sanchez on Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/fisanchezn>

Christine Armario on Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/cearmario>

Fire put out at 86-story residential skyscraper in Dubai

By AYA BATRAWY, Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Police in Dubai have reopened the streets around one of the world's tallest residential skyscrapers after firefighters put out a blaze that erupted early Friday in the high-rise, forcing residents to evacuate in the middle of the night and sending chunks of debris plummeting below.

No major injuries had been reported. A few people were treated for smoke inhalation, according to Dubai's Gulf News website.

Several residents said the fire broke out just after 1 a.m. at the 86-story Torch Tower — a more than 1,100-foot-tall (335 meters) residential building in Dubai's popular waterfront Marina district. The same building had also caught fire just two-and-a-half years earlier.

The cause of the fire on was not immediately known but in the past, such infernos in Dubai have been linked to highly flammable building cladding — as was the devastating June tower fire in London that killed at least 80 people.

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"You never think it's going to happen to you," said Alireza Aletomeh, a resident of the tower. "I had cash in there, furniture, paintings. ... Many things that are very valuable to me."

Aletomeh, a sales manager, said he moved to the Torch Tower just three months ago, snagging an apartment on the 54th floor of the luxury tower. He said he was coming home after midnight when building security guards told him to remain in the street because a fire had erupted.

He said his roommate grabbed their passports and that it took him more than two hours to come down the stairway because of the rush of people trying to get out at the same time. At least one woman passed out in the stairway, Aletomeh said.

More than 40 floors of the building on one side were engulfed in flames as residents looked on from below, many in tears. The firefighters battled the blaze for more than two hours.

Dubai's Civil Defense announced at about 3:30 a.m. that firefighters had brought the blaze under control and said cooling operations were underway. Authorities shared video of the building from the outside later on Friday, showing the entire length of the tower charred on one side.

By midday Friday, a few police cars could be seen in the area, but the streets had been wiped clean of the debris, some of which had fallen on cars parked below.

However, the skyscraper remained closed to residents, some of whom were moved to a nearby and even taller residential tower while others decided to stay with friends. Officials said they were working on providing shelter for those affected and assessing the damage.

The Torch Tower also caught fire in February 2015; there were also no casualties reported in that blaze. Parts of the building were still undergoing restoration work when the second fire broke out early Friday.

In both incidents, fire alarms alerted residents and building staff knocked on doors to ensure evacuation.

Aletomeh, who is now staying with friends, said towers like the Torch should have sprinklers. He wondered why Civil Defense crews did not deploy helicopters to try and extinguish the fire quicker.

"Putting out the fire was the most important thing, which took them so long," he said.

Simon Bach, a New Zealander who lives in a high-rise across the street, told The Associated Press he saw a few policemen as well as Emiratis in traditional white robes helping people get out. About 10 to 12 firetrucks arrived quickly on the scene, he said.

He said just as the firefighters had seemed to bring the blaze under control, falling debris ignited a part of the building further down.

"It seemed really out of control," he said. "People were streaming out of the car parks of the building."

Several skyscrapers in the United Arab Emirates have caught fire in recent years, including a towering inferno that engulfed a 63-story luxury hotel in Dubai on New Year's Eve in 2016. In that blaze, as in others in Dubai in recent years, residents escaped without major injury.

And on Thursday evening, in the neighboring emirate of Sharjah, an under-construction tower caught fire that raged for several hours as local media and nearby residents posted dramatic images of the blaze.

Earlier this year, Dubai passed new fire safety rules requiring buildings with quick-burning side paneling to replace it with more fire-resistant siding. Authorities have previously acknowledged that at least 30,000 buildings across the UAE have cladding or paneling that safety experts have said accelerates the rapid spread of fires.

While the new regulations are now in place for construction in Dubai and other cities, it's unclear how authorities will force owners to replace flammable siding with better material.

The tragic June inferno in London prompted Britain to order more thorough testing on the cladding systems of its towers.

Associated Press writers Adam Schreck, Kamran Jebreili and Malak Harb contributed to this report from Dubai.

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 Friday:

1. WHY A GRAND JURY IN DC IS IN USE IN RUSSIA PROBE

Special Counsel Robert Mueller is using a grand jury in Washington as part of an investigation into potential coordination between the Trump campaign and Russia. Meanwhile, senators have introduced bipartisan bills aimed at protecting Mueller from being fired by President Donald Trump.

2. WHICH EX-TRUMP TEAM MEMBER REVEALED MORE ABOUT HIS FINANCIAL TIES

President Donald Trump's former national security adviser, Michael Flynn, is revealing a brief advisory role with a firm related to a controversial data analysis company that aided the Trump campaign, The Associated Press has learned.

3. ALL-POWERFUL VENEZUELAN ASSEMBLY TO OPEN AMID PROTESTS

In Venezuela, President Nicolas Maduro vows to install a new constituent assembly that will trump every other branch of government while opposition leaders call for a mass protest to ensure delegates know their arrival is unwelcome.

4. WHERE A TALL TOWER BURNS

In Dubai, more than 40 floors of the 86-story Torch Tower have burned on one side of the building, an Associated Press journalist near the scene of the blaze said.

5. CONGRESS ADJOURNS WITH MUCH UNDONE, TENSIONS WITH TRUMP

Congress is heading out for its summer recess, leaving a slim record of accomplishments, and tensions between President Donald Trump and congressional Republicans simmering into public view.

6. WHY TRUMP'S TRANSGENDER TWEETS CAUSE CONSTERNATION IN PENTAGON

The Defense Department has been plunged into a legal and moral quagmire by the president's tweets declaring transgender people unwelcome in the armed forces

7. WHAT TRUMP SAID IN CALLS WITH FOREIGN LEADERS

Transcripts reveal Trump urges the Mexican president to stop saying his country won't pay for the wall along the southern U.S. border. To Australia's prime minister, Trump complains that a deal on asylum seekers makes him look bad and says he had a more pleasant conversation with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

8. WHY CITIES ARE BAFFLED BY JEFF SESSIONS

Attorney General Jeff Sessions takes new steps to punish cities he believes are not cooperating with federal immigration agents in a move that is met with bewilderment by local officials who say they did not know why they are being singled out.

9. WHO JAVIER VALDEZ CARDENAS WAS

One of at least seven Mexican journalists to die this year. He wrote of narco-violence: "The greatest error is to live in Mexico and to be a journalist."

10. DUNKIN WITH A DONUT HOLE

Dunkin' is thinking about dumping Donuts from its name.

Sea dispute, N. Korea, Muslim militants top ASEAN meetings

By JIM GOMEZ and TERESA CEROJANO, Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines (AP) — Alarm over North Korea's intercontinental ballistic missile tests, a tentative step to temper South China Sea disputes and unease over a disastrous siege by pro-Islamic State group militants will grab the spotlight in an annual gathering of Southeast Asia's top diplomats with their Asian and Western counterparts.

The 27 nations deploying their foreign ministers for three days of summitry and handshake photo-ops in Manila starting Saturday include the main protagonists in long-tormenting conflicts led by the United States, Russia, China, Japan and South and North Korea.

The Philippines plays host as this year's chairman of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, or ASEAN.

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It's an unwieldy 10-nation collective of democracies, monarchies and authoritarian regimes founded half a century ago in the Cold-War era, which prides itself for being a bulwark of diplomacy in a region scarred by a history of wars and interminable conflicts.

A look at the main issues expected to dominate the meetings:

SOUTH CHINA SEA

Chinese and ASEAN foreign ministers will endorse a two-page framework of a long-sought code of conduct in the disputed South China Sea when they meet on Saturday. The Philippines calls the development a major diplomatic progress in efforts to ease a potential flashpoint.

Critics say the agreed outline of key principles is lopsidedly in China's favor and suspect that Beijing may have consented to it to divert protests as it tries to complete land reclamations and fortify its man-made islands with a missile defense system.

While the framework carries hope for a diplomatic approach to the disputes, it noticeably failed to mention China's construction of new islands and an arbitration ruling last year that invalidated the historic basis of Beijing's claim to virtually the entire sea, a strategic waterway for commerce and defense. China has dismissed the arbitration ruling, which was put forward by the Philippines, as a sham.

Backed by its treaty ally the United States, the Philippines was the most vocal critic of China's assertive actions in the contested region until President Rodrigo Duterte rose to power last year. He swiftly moved to rekindle ties with Beijing in the hope of boosting trade and securing infrastructure funding while indefinitely sidelining efforts to secure Chinese compliance with the ruling.

Beijing's cozier ties with Manila under Duterte have calmed tensions and prompted China to allow Filipinos back to a disputed shoal, but arbitration proponents worry that Duterte was squandering an opportunity to harness the rule of law to restrain aggressive acts in the disputed region.

A draft of a joint communique to be issued by the ASEAN ministers welcomes the conclusion of talks on the framework, but drops any mention of regional concerns over land reclamations and militarist moves in the South China Sea, which ASEAN members had agreed to include in their previous statements.

NORTH KOREA

Following North Korea's two recent and successful ICBM tests, the U.S. and its allies quickly signaled their intention to impose additional sanctions against Pyongyang through a U.N. resolution. Along with South Korea and Japan, the U.S. is also expected to lead a barrage of condemnations against Pyongyang at the ASEAN Regional Forum, an annual security conference to be held in Manila on Monday. North Korea has confirmed that its top diplomat, Ri Yong Ho, will attend, raising the specter of a verbal showdown in the 27-nation forum, which also includes Pyongyang's ally, China.

Ahead of the meeting, a senior State Department official told reporters in Washington that the U.S. was moving to have North Korea suspended from the ARF for going against its conflict-prevention objectives. It's part of America's broader effort to isolate Pyongyang diplomatically and force it to end missile tests and abandon its nuclear weapons program.

Removing North Korea from the grouping, however, will be tough. There is no exclusion procedure and the ARF decides by consensus, so any U.S. move against Pyongyang can be defeated by any country, including China.

"I think what we would expect to see this year at the meeting would be a general chorus of condemnation of North Korea's provocative behavior and pretty serious diplomatic isolation directed at the North Korean foreign minister," said Acting Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Susan Thornton.

In Manila, the ARF ministers will express their grave concern over the North's ICBM testing, along with previous missile launches and two nuclear tests in 2016. They will repeat calls for Pyongyang to immediately comply with its obligations under U.N. resolutions and ask that it exercise self-restraint "in the interest of maintaining peace, security and stability in the region and the world," according to a draft statement to be issued by the Philippines, as ARF chairman.

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The North would respond by claiming "during the meeting that its nuclear weapons program is an act of self-defense against a hostile policy towards it," the draft statement said.

MARAWI SIEGE

The ASEAN meetings are held under heavy security in Manila as thousands of Philippine troops press a major offensive to finally quell a siege by Islamic State group-linked militants that has dragged on for more than two months in southern Marawi and turned large swaths of the lakeside city into a smoldering battlefield. The fighting has left nearly 700 combatants, including more than 520 gunmen, and civilians dead and displaced the entire population of the mosque-studded city.

The Marawi crisis has triggered concerns that the Islamic State group may be gaining a foothold in Southeast Asia through allied local militants, as it faces major setbacks in Syria and Iraq.

At the ARF, the ministers were to strongly condemn "recent acts of terrorism" without mentioning Marawi by name and reiterate their commitment to counterterrorism strategies, according to the draft ARF communique. Those steps include promoting moderation and effectively harnessing "social media to counter the spread of terrorists' narratives online."

Congress recessing, leaving much undone, tensions with Trump

WASHINGTON (AP) — Lawmakers have scattered for their summer recess, leaving behind a slim record of achievements and a steaming President Donald Trump. The president is angry about what the Republican-led Congress couldn't do — repeal Obamacare — as well as one of the few things it did: approve a Russia sanctions bill he detests.

So Republican senators leave Washington with simmering tensions between them and the White House now out in public for all to see. They'll face voters back home who have cause for frustration about an unproductive Congress led by a party given over to infighting.

Lamenting poor relations with Russia, Trump sniped over Twitter on Thursday, "You can thank Congress, the same people that can't even give us HCare!"

"I was shocked by that," responded Pennsylvania Republican Sen. Pat Toomey, who is not one for criticizing Trump publicly. "Relations with Russia are in a bad place, and it's entirely because of Vladimir Putin, it's not because of Congress."

Overall, as Republicans took stock of the past seven months of control of the House and Senate under the Trump administration, the mood was glum. The House began its summer recess last week, but as senators rushed for the exits Thursday they were still pointing to the confirmation of Neil Gorsuch to the Supreme Court as their signal success, even though that happened back in April.

Last week's failure of their Obamacare repeal efforts after seven years of ardent campaign promises still stung. And Republicans have also failed to make much progress on other marquee agenda items, like a tax overhaul or an infrastructure bill, while falling behind on the annual spending bills needed to keep the lights on in government. A fight on that looms this fall or winter, along with the threat of a government shutdown if Trump presses for money for his border wall that Democrats are certain to reject.

"We've got to do better," said Sen. Ron Johnson, a Wisconsin Republican.

In a final burst of action Thursday, the Senate overwhelmingly approved a Food and Drug Administration funding bill, and agreed to more than 60 Trump administration nominees, more executive branch nominations in a single day than the Senate had approved all year to date. Republicans have bitterly blamed Democrats' foot-dragging on nominees for many of their problems, and Majority Leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky heralded Thursday's actions as "an important step towards filling critical roles throughout the administration."

Indeed, GOP lawmakers have complained all year that they're not getting enough credit for the things they are doing, as opposed to criticism for what they are not.

"We have not done well on the big events," said Sen. Tim Scott of South Carolina. "But the run of the mill, the bipartisan legislation, that never gets actual media attention, I think we've had a fairly robust six

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months.”

Like other Republicans, Scott cited the GOP’s success in overturning a series of Obama administration regulations, employing the little-used Congressional Review Act.

Yet what lawmakers left undone promises to make for an ugly September on Capitol Hill.

Two must-do items will dominate the agenda: increasing the government’s debt limit to prevent a catastrophic default on U.S. obligations like interest payments and Social Security checks; and passing a temporary spending bill to keep government agencies up and running.

The debt limit increase is particularly nettlesome and many Republicans in Congress simply can’t bring themselves to vote for it. But with a Republican in the White House and the party controlling both the House and the Senate, it’s the GOP’s responsibility to deliver the votes.

The White House and congressional Republicans are also promising action early this fall to change the loophole-choked tax code and lower rates for both corporations and individuals. After their meltdown on health care, Republicans are particularly determined to succeed with a tax overhaul, with some arguing that if they succeed in giving voters a tax break, the Obamacare repeal failure will be forgiven and forgotten.

But core tax overhaul principles — such as whether the effort would add to the budget deficit — haven’t been ironed out, much less the devilish details.

And a wild card element is whether Trump will press to pay for the U.S.-Mexico border wall as part of the spending bill. That could spark a confrontation with Democrats, and even threaten a shutdown. Cooler heads may counsel the White House to put off that confrontation until later.

Still, after the past rocky months, Republicans are hoping against hope that with all the work ahead, relations with the White House will improve. They’re hanging on to one cause for optimism: the appointment of John Kelly as White House chief of staff, which several GOP senators said they hope will calm the chaos on the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue.

“I think how the president moves now into the next issues we deal with is really important,” said Sen. Roy Blunt of Missouri. “And we’re hopeful about the new staff structure and I think we’re going to see things begin to happen in different ways.”

Associated Press writers Andrew Taylor and Alan Fram contributed.

Trump talked tersely with leaders of Mexico, Australia

By LAURIE KELLMAN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Transcripts of President Donald Trump’s conversations with the leaders of Mexico and Australia in January offer new details on how the president parried with the leaders over the politics of the border wall and refugee policy — with random asides on such subjects as drug abuse in New Hampshire.

The president’s exchanges with Mexican President Enrique Pena Nieto and Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull just a week after the inauguration were widely reported upon at the time. But transcripts published Friday by The Washington Post offer new detail on the new president’s blunt exchanges with the U.S. allies. The White House said Thursday that the release of the transcripts is a disservice to Trump.

“I’m not going to comment on leaked calls,” White House spokeswoman Lindsay Walters said. “It’s a national security matter when phone call transcripts are being leaked out. It prevents the president from being able to do what he does best, negotiate with foreign leaders.”

In his conversation with Pena Nieto, Trump urges the Mexican president to stop saying his country won’t pay for the wall along the southern U.S. border, and the two agree to stop talking about the subject in public.

In the Turnbull conversation, the two leaders discuss a 2016 refugee deal between their nations, under which the Obama administration agreed to accept asylum seekers who had been trying to get to Australia. Turnbull insists to Trump that the deal is still on. Trump complains that the deal makes him look bad and says he had a more pleasant conversation with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Highlights from the conversations:

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POLITICS OF THE WALL

Trump acknowledges that talk about building a wall at the US-Mexico border is more about image management than economic policy.

"Believe it or not, this is the least important thing that we are talking about, but politically this might be the most important talk about," he said. "But in terms of dollars - or pesos - it is the least important thing."

He acknowledges both leaders are "in a little bit of a political bind" because each has vowed not to pay for the wall.

"If you are going to say that Mexico is not going to pay for the wall, then I do not want to meet with you guys anymore because I cannot live with that," he adds.

Pena Nieto tells Trump: "Let us stop talking about the wall. ... But my position has been and will continue to be very firm saying that Mexico cannot pay for that wall."

NEW HAMPSHIRE SLAM

Trump says he won New Hampshire "because New Hampshire is a drug-infested den."

Trump won the GOP primary in New Hampshire. Democrat Hillary Clinton won the state in the general election.

New Hampshire Gov. Chris Sununu on Thursday bristled at Trump's description.

"The president is wrong," Sununu said in a statement, adding that overdoses and drug-related deaths are declining in key parts of the state. "It's disappointing his mischaracterization of this epidemic ignores the great things this state has to offer."

THE REFUGEE DEAL_BAD OPTICS

In the Turnbull call, Trump complains about being saddled with an Obama administration agreement to help resettle some refugees who attempted to reach Australia by boat, particularly as Trump is rolling out his travel ban.

"Boy, that will make us look awfully bad," Trump says. "Here I am calling for a ban where I am not letting anybody in and we take 2,000 people. Really it looks like 2,000 people that Australia does not want, and I do not blame you by the way, but the United States has become like a dumping ground."

Turnbull counters that "this is a big deal, and I think we should respect deals."

Trump returns: "This is going to kill me. I am the world's greatest person that does not want to let people into the country. And now I am agreeing to take 2,000 people, and I agree I can vet them, but that puts me in a bad position."

DEALMAKING AND DIPLOMACY

Turnbull, in pressing for the refugee deal to be honored, repeatedly appeals to Trump's background as a dealmaker.

"There is nothing more important in business or politics than a deal is a deal," he says.

Trump tells the Australian leader: "You have brokered many a stupid deal in business, and I respect you, but I guarantee that you broke many a stupid deal. This is a stupid deal. This deal will make me look terrible...I am going to get killed on this thing."

He adds: "I will be seen as a weak and ineffective leader in my first week by these people. This is a killer."

Turnbull offers some advice: "You can certainly say that it was not a deal that you would have done, but you are going to stick with it."

PLEASANTRIES?

Trump is blunt in sizing up his exchange with Turnbull, telling him: "This was my most unpleasant call, because I will be honest with you. I hate taking these people. I guarantee you, they are bad. That is why they are in prison right now. They are not going to be wonderful people who go on to work for the local milk people."

He adds: "That is enough, Malcolm. I have had it. I have been making these calls all day, and this is the most unpleasant call all day. Putin was a pleasant call."

Turnbull tries a more diplomatic tack, telling the president: "Thank you for your commitment. It is very important to us."

He pledges to "be there again and again" for the U.S. The call ends with them thanking each other.

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Despite the heated exchange, Trump later tweets: "Thank you to Prime Minister of Australia for telling the truth about our very civil conversation that FAKE NEWS media lied about. Very nice!"

Follow Kellman on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/APLaurieKellman>

Associated Press writer Darlene Superville contributed to this story from Air Force One.

Cities baffled as Jeff Sessions targets them on immigration

By **SADIE GURMAN** and **RUSSELL CONTRERAS**, Associated Press

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP) — Attorney General Jeff Sessions took new steps Thursday to punish cities he believes are not cooperating with federal immigration agents in a move that was met with bewilderment by local officials who said they did not know why they were being singled out.

The Justice Department sent letters to four cities struggling with gun violence, telling them they would not be eligible for a program that provides money to combat drug trafficking and gang crime unless they give federal immigration authorities access to jails and notify agents before releasing inmates wanted on immigration violations.

Baltimore, Albuquerque, and Stockton and San Bernardino in California all expressed interest in the Justice Department's Public Safety Partnership, which enlists federal agents, analysts and technology to help communities find solutions to crime.

None of the four has declared itself a "sanctuary city," a mostly symbolic term that nevertheless is strongly associated with ordinances aimed at shielding illegal immigrants.

Regardless, "by taking simple, commonsense considerations into account, we are encouraging every jurisdiction in this country to cooperate with federal law enforcement," Sessions said in a statement that accompanied the letters. "That will ultimately make all of us safer — especially law enforcement on our streets."

The threat marks Sessions' latest effort to force local authorities to help federal agents detain and deport people living in the country illegally as part of a push to reduce crime he believes is linked to illegal immigration. The attorney general has repeatedly vowed to withhold federal money from cities that do not cooperate, similar to how previous administrations have held back highway funds during debates over the speed limit and drinking age.

But it was not immediately clear to some of the cities why they were targeted.

In a letter to Sessions, Republican Albuquerque Mayor Richard Berry denied that New Mexico's largest city is a sanctuary for immigrants living in the country illegally and said he has been trying to work with immigration authorities since taking office in 2009. In fact, Berry said, Immigration and Customs Enforcement staffing at the prison transport center fell in recent years.

"If your agency has questions or concerns with our (Bernalillo) County jails, I would refer you to their leadership," Berry wrote.

Peter Simonson, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union in New Mexico, called the demands "a bullying tactic."

Another concern raised by cities is that police who patrol the streets book suspects into jails run by county or state authorities over which they have no control. The Justice Department's letters focus on giving federal immigration agents access to such detention facilities.

In San Bernardino, officers book anyone they arrest into jails that are run by the county, not the Southern California city of 216,000 people, said Police Chief Jarrod Burguan.

"The city of San Bernardino has never taken any formal act to declare itself a sanctuary city," Burguan said. "Our policies have been very, very consistent over the years."

Stockton Police Chief Eric Jones said his officers also book suspects into a county-run facility and are tasked with fighting violent crime, not enforcing federal immigration laws.

"That does not mean we don't work with our other federal partners, but that is just not a function of

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ours," he said.

Nor do police enforce immigration laws in Baltimore, where arrestees are taken to a jail run by the state, said Anthony McCarthy, a spokesman for Mayor Catherine Pugh. The state says it adheres to federal policies on immigration in its detention system.

"We are receiving tremendous federal support for the violence-reduction actions, and we wouldn't want anything to deter the progress we hope to make on that front," McCarthy said.

Sessions has pledged to make fighting immigration and street crime the Justice Department's top priority, but the strategy is putting him at odds with some city leaders, who say the best way to fight crime and build community trust is to keep local police out of federal immigration matters.

Last week, Sessions told cities they must meet the same conditions or lose out on millions of dollars from a separate grant program that helps police departments pay for everything from bulletproof vests to body cameras, a move that made some local officials more defiant.

In the four letters, the Justice Department asked the prospective cities' police departments to show proof of their compliance by Aug. 18.

In Albuquerque, immigrant student activists said the letter was part of the Trump administration's broader attack on immigrants.

"It is a vision of terror for families like mine," said Gabriela Hernandez, Southwest Organizer for United We Dream.

The Justice Department in June tapped 12 cities to receive aid through the Public Safety Partnership, and officials said the four cities targeted Thursday had expressed interest in the next chance at participating. Cities were chosen based on higher-than-average rates of violence and willingness to receive the help and training.

Cities that want to be involved going forward will have to show they allow unfettered communication between police and federal immigration authorities, give agents access to jails in order to question immigrants and provide agents with 48 hours of notice when someone in the country illegally is about to be released.

Gurman reported from Washington. Associated Press writers Amy Taxin in Santa Ana, California, and Juliet Linderman in Baltimore contributed to this report.

AP source: Mueller using grand jury in DC in Russia probe

By CHAD DAY and ERIC TUCKER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Special Counsel Robert Mueller is using a grand jury in Washington as part of an investigation into potential coordination between the Trump campaign and Russia, a person familiar with the probe said Thursday.

The use of a grand jury, a standard prosecution tool in criminal investigations, suggests that Mueller and his team of investigators are likely to hear from witnesses and demand documents in the coming weeks and months. The person who confirmed to The Associated Press that Mueller had turned to a grand jury was not authorized to discuss the investigation by name and spoke on condition of anonymity.

The Wall Street Journal first reported the use of a grand jury.

Grand juries are common vehicles to subpoena witnesses and records and to present evidence, though they do not suggest any criminal charges are near or will necessarily be sought. It was not immediately clear how or whether the Washington grand jury was connected to the work of a separate one in Alexandria, Virginia. That panel has been used to gather information on Michael Flynn, Trump's former national security adviser.

A spokesman for Mueller's team did not return an email seeking comment.

Mueller's reliance on a grand jury is the "logical next step in this investigation" given that it's the traditional method for prosecutors to gather evidence, said Washington defense lawyer Jacob Frenkel.

"The use of the grand jury neither escalates, nor establishes a timeline for, the investigation," he added.

Meanwhile, lawyers for President Donald Trump said they were unaware of the existence of a grand jury

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and had no information to suggest the president himself was under federal investigation.

"With respect to the news of the federal grand jury, I have no reason to believe that the president is under investigation," defense attorney John Dowd told the AP.

Ty Cobb, special counsel to the president, said he wasn't aware Mueller had started using a new grand jury.

"Grand jury matters are typically secret," Cobb said. "The White House favors anything that accelerates the conclusion of his work fairly. ... The White House is committed to fully cooperating with Mr. Mueller."

It was not clear what witnesses might appear before the grand jury or what evidence it might be accumulating or presented with.

Though there is "considerable deference to the prosecutors and their recommendations" when it comes to a grand jury, "the mere fact of presenting evidence to the grand jury does not obligate prosecutors in any way to ask them to return an indictment," Frenkel said.

Mueller was appointed special counsel in May by the Justice Department following the firing by Trump of FBI Director James Comey. He has since assembled a team of more than a dozen investigators, including current and former Justice Department prosecutors with experience in international bribery, organized crime and financial fraud.

That team has been working at an undisclosed location in Washington, so presenting evidence inside a federal courthouse in the city could be more convenient for the group of investigators than working out of Alexandria. Mueller also worked as a prosecutor in Washington before becoming FBI director, a job he held for 12 years.

News of the grand jury came as senators introduced two bipartisan bills aimed at protecting Mueller from being fired by Trump, with both parties signaling resistance to any White House effort to derail the investigation into Russian meddling in last year's election.

Trump's defense team has been looking into potential conflicts of interest among members of Mueller's team, such as past political contributions to Democrats including Hillary Clinton, and Trump has warned that any effort by Mueller to look into his finances would fall outside the scope of Mueller's appointment.

Under the regulations, Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein is the government official empowered to fire Mueller under limited circumstances, such as conflict of interest and dereliction of duty. Rosenstein, who appointed Mueller, has publicly said he has seen no basis for firing him.

Trump attorney Jay Sekulow told Fox News on Thursday that "the president is not thinking about firing Robert Mueller so the speculation that's out there is just incorrect."

He also downplayed the significance of the grand jury, calling it "a standard operating procedure when you've got a situation like this."

Associated Press writer Stephen Braun and Mary Clare Jalonick contributed to this report.

Follow Chad Day on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/ChadSDay> and Eric Tucker at <http://www.twitter.com/etuckerAP>

APNewsBreak: Flynn details tie to data firm, transition pay

By CHAD DAY and STEPHEN BRAUN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's former national security adviser, Michael Flynn, is revealing a brief advisory role with a firm related to a controversial data analysis company that aided the Trump campaign, The Associated Press has learned.

The disclosure of Flynn's link to Cambridge Analytica will come in an amended public financial filing in which the retired U.S. Army lieutenant general also discloses income that includes payments from the Trump transition team, according to a person close to Flynn who spoke to AP on condition of anonymity Thursday to describe details of the filing made to the White House.

The amended disclosure shows that just before the end of the campaign, Flynn entered into a consulting

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agreement with SCL Group, a Virginia-based company related to Cambridge Analytica, the data mining and analysis firm that worked with Trump's campaign.

The person said Flynn didn't perform work or accept payment as part of the agreement with SCL Group. The details of Flynn's role with SCL weren't fully laid out, the person said, noting that Flynn terminated his involvement shortly after Trump won the presidency.

Cambridge Analytica was heavily funded by the family of Robert Mercer, a hedge fund manager who also backed the campaign and other conservative candidates and causes. Cambridge Analytica also worked for the successful pro-Brexit campaign in 2016 to pull Britain out of the European Union. Trump administration chief strategist Steve Bannon was a vice president of Cambridge Analytica before he joined the Trump campaign.

Democratic lawmakers and Trump critics have seized on Cambridge Analytica's role as they've pushed congressional investigators to scrutinize the Trump campaign's data operation as part of probes into Russia's interference in the 2016 election.

Flynn's previous filing, submitted to the White House and Office of Government Ethics in March, listed at least \$1.3 million in earnings, including between \$50,000 and \$100,000 from his consulting company, Flynn Intel Group Inc. The latest filing lists at least \$1.8 million in income.

Flynn's amended filing comes some six months after he was ousted from the White House for misleading the vice president about conversations he had with the former Russian ambassador to the U.S. It also comes as Special Counsel Robert Mueller and congressional committees are scrutinizing Flynn's business deals and foreign connections.

The person close to Flynn said he is disclosing the information in an amended filing to make sure the "public record is accurate and transparent." The person noted that Flynn and his legal team have spent months piecing together the information necessary for the filing without the assistance of the White House counsel's office or the Office of Government Ethics.

In the filing, Flynn reports earning about \$28,000 from the Trump presidential transition and more than \$5,000 as a consultant to an aborted plan to build nuclear power plants across the Middle East. The consulting connection with a group of companies involved in the power plant proposal had been disclosed in Flynn's previous filing, but it had not indicated that he had received payment.

Flynn's new filing also provided more details about his consulting work for NJK Holding Corporation, a firm headed by Iranian-American multi-millionaire Nasser Kazeminy. The filing shows that Flynn was paid more than \$140,000 for his roles as adviser and consultant to Minneapolis-based NJK.

Flynn also served as vice chairman at GreenZone Systems, a tech firm funded by NJK and headed by Bijan Kian, who was Flynn's business partner in Flynn Intel Group, a consulting firm that was active last year but is now defunct. Flynn Intel is now under scrutiny by federal authorities and congressional investigators for its role in research and lobbying work for a Turkish businessman tied to the government of Turkey.

In a statement to the AP, NJK said Flynn "played an advisory role to NJK Holding relative to its investment interests in security." The firm added that in his roles with NJK and GreenZone, Flynn "provided his counsel and guidance on public sector business opportunities for secure communications technology within the U.S. Department of Defense" and with other agencies.

NJK said Kian has no current involvement with NJK or GreenZone.

Earlier Thursday, Rep. Elijah Cummings, D-Md., the ranking Democrat on the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, asked Kian for documents detailing Flynn's foreign business contacts and travel. Flynn listed Kian as a personal reference in 2016 during his effort to renew his military security clearance. Kian told military investigators that Flynn had several foreign business contacts, but Flynn did not provide any of those contacts to investigators, Cummings said.

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Flames engulf 86-story residential skyscraper in Dubai

By MALAK HARB and AYA BATRAWY, Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — A fire broke out after midnight in one of the world's tallest residential towers in Dubai, engulfing part of the skyscraper and sending chunks of debris plummeting below.

More than 40 floors of the 86-story Torch Tower were burning on one side of the building, an Associated Press journalist near the scene of the blaze said. Building residents could be seen on the street outside crying with several saying the fire broke out just after 1 a.m. Friday local time.

Dubai's Civil Defense announced at about 3:30 a.m. that firefighters had brought the blaze under control and that no injuries had been reported.

"Cooling operations are underway," Dubai's official media office said on Twitter.

It was the second time in 2 ½ years that the more than 1,100-foot-tall (335 meters) tower has been ravaged by fire. The tower, located in the popular waterfront Marina district, caught fire in February 2015, but there were no major casualties reported in that blaze.

Early Friday, authorities shared a photo of the charred and blackened tower but it was no longer visibly in flames. Officials said they were now working on providing shelter for those affected.

Dubai police cordoned off several blocks around the building, keeping people away from the fire's falling debris.

Several skyscrapers in the United Arab Emirates have caught fire in recent years, including a towering inferno that engulfed a 63-story luxury hotel in Dubai on New Year's Eve in 2016. In that blaze, as in others in Dubai in recent years, residents escaped without major injury.

Earlier this year, Dubai passed new fire safety rules requiring buildings with quick-burning side paneling to replace it with more fire-resistant siding. Authorities have previously acknowledged that at least 30,000 buildings across the UAE have cladding or paneling that safety experts have said accelerates the rapid spread of fires.

A devastating tower fire in London in June killed at least 80 people and prompted Britain to order more thorough testing on the cladding systems of its towers.

Showdown set in Venezuela as new assembly prepares for power

By FABIOLA SANCHEZ and CHRISTINE ARMARIO, Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) — Venezuela is nearing a showdown, with President Nicolas Maduro vowing to install a new constituent assembly that will trump every other branch of government and opposition leaders calling for a mass protest to ensure delegates know their arrival is unwelcome.

The first meeting of the 545 delegates is expected to convene Friday at the legislative palace in Caracas — only yards (meters) from the room where the opposition-controlled National Assembly holds its sessions.

The legislative palace has been witness to bloody clashes in recent weeks and Friday's installation of the all-powerful assembly, which Maduro has vowed to use to strip opposition lawmakers of their constitutional immunity, sets the stage for an intensified power struggle. Opposition lawmakers in congress have vowed they will only be removed by force.

"The only way they'll get us out of here is by killing us," declared Freddy Guevara, the National Assembly's first vice president. "They will never have the seat that the people of Venezuela gave us."

Sunday's election of the constituent assembly has come under mounting scrutiny after the CEO of an international voting technology company said Wednesday that "without any doubt" the voter turnout numbers had been tampered with — accusations that Maduro and the National Electoral Council have dismissed. A growing list of foreign nations has refused to recognize the assembly and many within Venezuela fear its installation will open a dark chapter in the nation's history.

"There has been a gradual erosion of democratic practice and this is a significant line that has been crossed," said Michael Shifter, president of the Washington-based think tank Inter-American Dialogue. "To attach the term democracy to Venezuela with this new constituent assembly is on very weak ground."

The U.S. State Department called the assembly illegitimate Thursday, saying the election was rigged to

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further entrench “the Maduro dictatorship.”

“The United States will not recognize the National Constituent Assembly,” spokeswoman Heath Nauert said.

On the eve of the assembly’s installation, the Spanish Embassy in Caracas was attacked with gasoline bombs. Prosecutors said two individuals on a motorcycle launched the devices, which started a fire but caused no reported injuries.

Carlos Romero, a professor and foreign relations analyst in Caracas, called the incident “extremely grave” and said it could further complicate relations between Venezuela and Madrid. Spain’s ambassador to Venezuela was among a group of legislators who visited the National Assembly on Tuesday in a show of support after the constituent assembly election.

Prominent constituent assembly members like Diosdado Cabello, the leader of the ruling socialist party, have said they plan to target the opposition-controlled congress and the country’s chief prosecutor, Luisa Ortega Diaz, a longtime supporter of the late Hugo Chavez who recently broke with Maduro. As one of its first tasks, Maduro has ordered the assembly to declare Ortega Diaz’s office in a state of emergency and entirely restructure it.

In a continuing show of defiance, Ortega Diaz filed papers Thursday seeking a court order to block installation of the new assembly. The request, filed to a lower court in an apparent attempt to circumvent the government-stacked Supreme Court, was almost certain to be denied.

She also ordered prosecutors to investigate the allegations of election tampering raised by Antonio Mugica, the head of the voting technology firm Smartmatic. Mugica told reporters in London on Wednesday that results recorded by his company’s systems and those reported by the National Electoral Council show the official turnout count was off by at least 1 million votes.

Pledges by opposition lawmakers to remain in power no matter what action the constituent assembly takes have opened the possibility of two governing bodies operating side by side — neither recognizing the other.

One opposition lawmaker, Henry Ramos Allup, said this week that if forcibly expelled from the legislative palace the National Assembly could potentially hold its sessions at another site.

Anti-government leaders are calling on Venezuelans to protest Friday as the new constituent assembly members take office.

The National Electoral Council said more than 8 million Venezuelans voted in the election, though independent analysts and opposition leaders contend the turnout was almost certainly less than half that figure.

Venezuela’s president defiantly dismissed those allegations, telling the new constituent members Wednesday night that he not only stood by the official count, but believed a further 2 million people would have voted if not blocked by anti-government protesters.

With the opposition boycotting the election, virtually all the candidates were government supporters, so turnout was watched as one of the only indicators of how much popular support there is for the constituent assembly.

Despite questions surrounding the vote, Maduro has all but ensured there is nothing that can stop the government from seating the new delegates.

“They are bent on plowing ahead with this power grab,” Shifter said, “and this is not going to stand in the way.”

Associated Press writer Fabiola Sanchez reported this story in Caracas and AP writer Christine Armario reported from Bogota, Colombia.

Fabiola Sanchez on Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/fisanchezn>

Christine Armario on Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/cearmario>

Hacker who helped stop global cyberattack arrested in US

By KEN RITTER and MATT O'BRIEN, Associated Press

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Marcus Hutchins, a young British researcher credited with derailing a global cyberattack in May, was arrested for allegedly creating and distributing malicious software designed to collect bank-account passwords, U.S. authorities said Thursday.

News of Hutchins' detention came as a shock to the cybersecurity community. Many had rallied behind the researcher whose quick thinking helped control the spread of the WannaCry ransomware attack that crippled thousands of computers.

Hutchins was detained in Las Vegas on his way back to Britain from an annual gathering of hackers and information security gurus. A grand jury indictment charged Hutchins with creating and distributing malware known as the Kronos banking Trojan.

Such malware infects web browsers, then captures usernames and passwords when an unsuspecting user visits a bank or other trusted location, enabling cybertheft.

The indictment, filed in a Wisconsin federal court last month, alleges that Hutchins and another defendant — whose name was redacted — conspired between July 2014 and July 2015 to advertise the availability of the Kronos malware on internet forums, sell the malware and profit from it. The indictment also accuses Hutchins of creating the malware.

Authorities said the malware was first made available in early 2014, and "marketed and distributed through AlphaBay, a hidden service on the Tor network." The U.S. Department of Justice announced in July that the AlphaBay "darknet" marketplace was shut down after an international law enforcement effort.

Hutchins' arraignment was postponed Thursday in U.S. District Court in Las Vegas by a magistrate judge who gave him until Friday afternoon to determine if he wants to hire his own lawyer.

Hutchins was in Las Vegas for Def Con, an annual cybersecurity conference that ended Sunday. On Wednesday, Hutchins made comments on Twitter that suggested he was at an airport getting ready to board a plane for a flight home. He never left Nevada.

Jake Williams, a respected cybersecurity researcher, said he found it difficult to believe Hutchins is guilty. The two men have worked on various projects, including training material for higher education for which the Briton declined payment.

"He's a stand-up guy," Williams said in a text chat. "I can't reconcile the charges with what I know about him."

A Justice Department spokesman confirmed the 22-year-old Hutchins was arrested Wednesday in Las Vegas. Officer Rodrigo Pena, a police spokesman in Henderson, near Las Vegas, said Hutchins spent the night in federal custody in the city lockup.

Andrew Mabbitt, a British digital security specialist who had been staying in Las Vegas with Hutchins, said he and his friends grew worried when they got "radio silence" from Hutchins for hours. The worries deepened when Hutchins' mother called to tell him the young researcher hadn't made his flight home.

Mabbitt said he eventually found Hutchins' name on a detention center website. News of his indictment Thursday left colleagues scrambling to understand what happened.

"We don't know the evidence the FBI has against him, however we do have some circumstantial evidence that he was involved in that community at the time," said computer security expert Rob Graham.

The big question is the identity of the co-defendant in the case, whose name is redacted in the indictment. Why was it blacked out? "Maybe the other guy testified against him," said Graham.

The co-defendant allegedly advertised the malware online. Hutchins is accused of creating and transmitting the program.

Williams, the president of Rendition Infosec, speculated that the co-defendant might have been caught up in the takedown of AlphaBay and framed Hutchins in exchange for a plea deal.

The problem with software creation is that often a program includes code written by multiple programmers. Prosecutors might need to prove that Hutchins wrote code with specific targets.

Williams pointed to a July 13, 2014 tweet by Hutchins, whose moniker is @MalwareTechBlog, asking if

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anyone had a sample of Kronos to share.

"I've written code that other people have injected malware into," said Graham. "We know that large parts of Kronos were written by other people."

One legal scholar who specializes in studying computer crime said it's unusual, and problematic, for prosecutors to go after someone simply for writing or selling malware — as opposed to using it to further a crime.

"This is the first case I know of where the government is prosecuting someone for creating or selling malware but not actually using it," said Orin Kerr, a law professor at George Washington University. Kerr said it will be difficult to prove criminal intent.

"It's a constant issue in criminal law — the helping of people who are committing a crime," Kerr said. "When is that itself a crime?"

O'Brien reported from Providence, Rhode Island. Associated Press writers Raphael Satter in Paris and Frank Bajak in Houston contributed to this report.

West Virginia governor, a Democrat, to switch to Republican

By JOHN RABY and BILL BARROW, Associated Press

HUNTINGTON, W.Va. (AP) — West Virginia Gov. Jim Justice announced Thursday he's switching parties to join Republicans as President Donald Trump visited the increasingly conservative state.

Justice told about 9,000 Trump supporters at a rally in Huntington that he will be changing his registration Friday. He recently visited the White House twice with proposals on manufacturing and coal, neither he nor Trump are politicians and they both ran to get something done, he said.

"This man is a good man. He's got a backbone. He's got real ideas," Justice said. "He cares about America. He cares about us in West Virginia."

Trump said they spoke a few weeks ago about working together to open coal mines and create jobs in furniture manufacturing and other forms of manufacturing. "But Gov. Justice did something else very important tonight. He showed the country that our agenda rises above left or right," he said.

Justice was elected in November with just 49 percent of the vote, 20 percentage points behind Trump's total in the presidential contest in the state. Trump won 77 percent of West Virginia's Republican primary voters in May.

The president promised throughout the campaign to resurrect the lagging coal industry that has declined amid changing energy markets, leaving many West Virginia communities devastated. The industry and many of its workers have blamed the decline mostly on former President Barack Obama and his environmental policies.

Justice's defection leaves Democrats with just 15 governors among 50 states.

In West Virginia, his jump is another blow for Democrats in a state they once ran without opposition. U.S. Sen. Joe Manchin and state Treasurer John Perdue will be the remaining statewide elected Democrats. Manchin is up for re-election in 2018, one of 10 Democratic senators running in states Trump won, a dynamic that gives Democrats an uphill path to reclaiming a Senate majority.

Manchin said he'll always be a West Virginia Democrat and was disappointed by Justice's decision but said he'll work with anyone regardless of party affiliation to benefit West Virginians.

Elected in his first run for statewide office, Justice is a 66-year-old businessman whose family owns farms and coal mines who largely funded his own campaign against then West Virginia Republican Senate President Bill Cole. He has spoken often during the campaign and since publicly about his friendship with the Trump family and hosted Donald Trump Jr. turkey hunting and trout fishing earlier this year.

Justice has turned the daily business operations over to his children while governor. He battled the Republican-controlled Legislature in his first year to limit budget cuts to Medicaid and to state colleges and universities, sometimes with public theatrics like bringing cow manure to a press conference.

He said Thursday that it was the defection from his positions by minority Democrats that resulted in

outcomes that hurt people. He said both his parents were staunch Republicans. "Today I tell you as West Virginians I can't help you any more being a Democrat governor," he said.

Republican House Speaker Tim Armstead said the increases in Republican registration and elected officials show people in the state want change. "We welcome all West Virginians to the Republican ranks," he said.

"We're eager to work with Gov. Justice to apply our team's conservative principles to the executive branch and make a clean break from the status quo that has dominated the previous two administrations," Senate President Mitch Carmichael said.

West Virginia Democratic Party Chairwoman Belinda Biafore said Justice became a Democrat because they care about people and then took advantage of them by taking their money and votes. "I think we can all guess just who he cares about by his decision today and it's not the people of West Virginia," she said.

Republican U.S. Sen. Shelley Moore Capito said Republicans represent the state's future and she's ready to work with Justice to grow the economy and fight for energy jobs.

In the national debate over health care, Justice expressed worries about future health coverage for 175,000 West Virginians in the expanded Medicaid program under the Affordable Care Act, but declined to push to repeal and replace "Obamacare." He said he believes Republicans and Democrats will "get it right" when they work together to overhaul the law.

Rep. Evan Jenkins, who switched from Democrat to Republican and won a U.S. House seat in 2014, said at a meet-and-greet in Huntington before the rally that "so many people in recent years have switched from Democrat to Republican, and if Jim Justice is making the switch, I welcome him to the Republican Party."

Jenkins is now running for Manchin's seat.

In May 2015, when he announced his candidacy, Justice said he wanted to put aside partisan politics and that he had changed his party registration multiple times. "I am much more suited to be a Democrat because I truly want to be the person who is trying to take up for the little guy," he said.

Associated Press writers Michael Virtanen in Morgantown and Jonathan Mattise in Nashville contributed to this report.

Flouting his own advice, Trump will take extended vacation

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Donald Trump once questioned the wisdom of taking vacations. "What's the point?" he asked.

But now the president is getting ready to join the annual August exodus from the city he calls "the swamp." Trump is due Friday to begin his first extended vacation from Washington since the inauguration: 17 days at his private golf club in central New Jersey.

The vacation could be driven in part by necessity. Everyone who works in the White House West Wing, including the Oval Office occupant himself, must clear out by the end of the week so that the government can replace a balky, 27-year-old heating and cooling system.

White House spokeswoman Lindsay Walters said Thursday that West Wing staff needs to vacate the premises in August while workers are replacing the building's HVAC system.

"The president's going to continue to work and we all need to be relocated out of the West Wing due to these renovations that should have taken place before," she said. "They either need to be repaired or replaced and it's not something that can go on while we're still occupying the West Wing."

Trump and his supporters like to publicize his disdain for taking vacations, when the truth is that he takes them constantly.

"Don't take vacations. What's the point? If you're not enjoying your work, you're in the wrong job," Trump wrote in his 2004 book, "Trump: Think Like a Billionaire."

He told Larry King in an interview that year that "most of the people I know that are successful really don't take vacations. Their business is their vacation. I rarely leave. You know that," Trump said. "You and I are friends. How often do you see me going away?"

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Actually, Trump gets out of town quite often. So far, he has spent 13 of 28 weekends in office away from the White House, mostly at his properties in Palm Beach, Florida, or in Bedminster, New Jersey, according to an Associated Press count. The figures include a weekend during official travel overseas, and Father's Day weekend at Camp David, the government-owned presidential retreat in Maryland.

Contrast Trump's frequent getaways with his criticism, before and during last year's presidential campaign, of former President Barack Obama's vacations and frequent golf outings.

"@BarackObama played golf yesterday. Now he heads to a 10 day vacation in Martha's Vineyard. Nice work ethic," Trump tweeted in August 2011.

Trump said last year that he wouldn't have time for golf if he became president. "I'm going to be working for you, I'm not going to have time to go play golf," he told supporters in Virginia. But he plays golf whenever he's at his clubs; sometimes it's the full 18 holes, other times less than that. His staff rarely acknowledges that he plays, even when photos of him on the course pop up on social media.

Presidents have been escaping Washington's summer heat and humidity ever since Thomas Jefferson looked out of the White House windows and watched as a white fog that was believed to be toxic rolled in. Harry Truman played poker on the porch in Key West, Florida. Ronald Reagan rode horses at his mountain ranch in California.

Bill Clinton and Barack Obama both spent August vacations on Martha's Vineyard, the tiny Massachusetts island that serves as a summer playground for the rich and famous. George W. Bush retreated to his secluded Crawford, Texas, ranch to clear brush and ride his mountain bike.

Besides the replacement of the West Wing's heating and cooling system, repairs also are to be made to the steps on the South Portico, the side of the White House facing the National Mall. Cosmetic upgrades to the West Wing, including interior painting, replacing carpeting and curtains and fixing water leaks in the press office ceiling, are also on the maintenance list. Repairmen and others are expected to work around the clock to complete the upgrades by Aug. 21.

Presidents travel with the equivalent of a mini-White House made up of advisers, other aides and security. The work of being president continues, and they must be prepared to handle a crisis at all hours and from wherever they are.

But chronic stress affects the body's ability to resist infection, maintain vital functions and avoid injuries, Susan Krauss Whitbourne, then a professor of psychological and brain sciences at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, wrote in a 2010 paper on the website of Psychology Today subtitled "why presidents (and all of us) need vacations."

Stressed-out people are more likely to get sick, have accidents, sleep poorly, be more irritable and less fun to be around. Whitbourne wrote that vacations break the "stress cycle."

"Perhaps it's good that someone as important as our president is showing that he believes it's beneficial to take a break from the office, get out and enjoy the outdoors in a little bit of a break in mindset and, we would hope, be able to go back to work refreshed and renewed and do a better job," Whitbourne, who currently teaches at the university's Boston campus, told the AP in a telephone interview. "I think that's the theory of vacations."

Associated Press writer Nancy Benac contributed to this report.

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

Girlfriend whose texts urged suicide gets 15 months in jail

By DENISE LAVOIE, AP Legal Affairs Writer

TAUNTON, Mass. (AP) — A young woman who as a teenager encouraged her suicidal boyfriend to kill himself in dozens of text messages and told him to "get back in" a truck filled with toxic gas was sentenced Thursday to 15 months in jail for involuntary manslaughter.

Michelle Carter was convicted in June by a judge who said her final instruction to Conrad Roy III caused

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his death. Carter was 17 when Roy, who was 18, was found dead of carbon monoxide poisoning in July 2014.

Juvenile Court Judge Lawrence Moniz gave Carter, now 20, a 2 1/2-year jail sentence but said she had to serve only 15 months of that. He also sentenced her to five years of probation. He granted a defense motion that will keep Carter out of jail until her appeals in state courts are exhausted.

The judge called the case, which has garnered international attention, "a tragedy for two families."

Carter's lawyer, Joseph Cataldo, asked the judge to spare her any jail time and instead give her five years of probation and require her to receive mental health counseling. He said she was struggling with mental health issues — bulimia, anorexia and depression — during the time she urged Roy to kill himself.

"Miss Carter will have to live with the consequences of this for the rest of her life," Cataldo said. "This was a horrible circumstance that she completely regrets."

Prosecutor Maryclare Flynn called probation "just not reasonable punishment" for Carter's role in Roy's death. She asked the judge to send Carter to state prison for seven to 12 years.

Flynn said Carter "undertook a deliberate, well-thought-out campaign" to cause Roy's death in a "quest for attention" and sympathy from her friends. She said after Roy's death, Carter put on a charade as "the grieving girlfriend" for Roy's family and friends, even though she had repeatedly pressured him to act on his suicidal thoughts.

Flynn said Carter could have stopped Roy because the two teenagers were on the phone together as Roy succumbed to carbon monoxide inside his truck.

"All she had to do was say, 'Get out of the car,' 'Get out of the truck,' and none of us would be here right now," Flynn said.

In dozens of text messages, Carter had urged Roy to follow through on his talk of taking his own life.

"The time is right and you are ready ... just do it babe," Carter wrote in a text the day he killed himself.

The sensational trial was closely watched on social media, in part because of the insistent tone of Carter's text messages.

"You can't think about it. You just have to do it," Carter wrote in one text. "You said you were gonna do it. Like I don't get why you aren't."

Cataldo argued Roy was determined to kill himself and nothing Carter did could change that. He said Carter initially tried to talk Roy out of it and urged him to get professional help but eventually went along with his plan. He also argued Carter's words amounted to free speech protected by the First Amendment.

In convicting Carter, the judge focused his ruling on Carter telling Roy to "get back in" after he climbed out of his truck as it was filling with carbon monoxide and told her he was afraid. The judge said those words constituted "wanton and reckless conduct" under the manslaughter statute.

Roy's relatives told the court they were devastated by his death. His father, Conrad Roy Jr., said it inflicted the "worst emotional pain" he has ever experienced.

"I am heartbroken," he said.

A teenage sister, Camden Roy, recalled her 13 years with her older brother and said she's "haunted" by the realization she'll never see him wed or be an aunt to his children.

Carter and Roy met in Florida in 2012 while both were on vacation with their families. After that, they only met in person a handful of times. Their relationship consisted mainly of texting.

Cataldo said he's confident Carter eventually will be vindicated. He said his appeal will be based on several grounds, including his argument Carter's text messages and conversations with Roy amounted to free speech protected by the Constitution. He said he will also argue Carter didn't break any laws because Massachusetts doesn't have a law against assisting or encouraging suicide.

This story has been corrected to show that prosecutors asked for a seven- to 12-year sentence, not a 20-year sentence, and that Roy's sister Camden talked about the 13 years she spent with him, not that she is 13 years old.

Neymar signs 5-year deal with PSG in world-record transfer

By SAMUEL PETREQUIN and JOSEPH WILSON, Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — Six years after taking over perennial underachiever Paris Saint-Germain, the French club's wealthy owners finally got what they wanted by hiring Neymar — a player they believe will bring them Champions League glory.

The Brazil star became the most expensive player in soccer history after completing his blockbuster transfer from Barcelona for 222 million euros (\$262 million) on Thursday. By paying the release clause in his contract, PSG shattered the world transfer record to sign arguably one of the top three best attacking players in the game, alongside Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo.

The previous transfer record had been set a year ago when Manchester United paid 105 million euros (then \$116 million) to bring Paul Pogba back from Juventus.

Ironically, the 25-year-old Neymar signed a five-year contract with the French league side just five months after playing a decisive role as Barcelona produced a comeback that made Champions League history - at PSG's expense.

Having lost their first leg match 4-0 in France, Barcelona was trailing 5-3 on aggregate in the 88th minute in Spain, only for Neymar to score twice in the final minutes before Sergi Roberto's winner in added time sealed a humiliating exit from the Round of 16 for PSG.

Next season, it will be different.

"Paris Saint-Germain's ambition attracted me to the club, along with the passion and the energy this brings," Neymar said in comments released by PSG. "I played four seasons in Europe and I feel ready to take the challenge. From today, I will do everything I can to help my new teammates, to open up new horizons for my club and to bring happiness to its millions of supporters around the world."

PSG would certainly welcome the kind of success that Neymar enjoyed in Spain.

In his four seasons there, Neymar scored 105 goals as Barcelona won the Champions League, Club World Cup, two Spanish league titles and Copa del Rey three times.

Now he will look to emerge from the shadow of five-time world player of the year Messi at Barcelona, becoming the biggest star in the French league in a team without the track record of success to match his former club.

While Barcelona has lifted the European Cup five times and won the FIFA Club World Cup three times, PSG is yet to win either prestigious competition.

Since Qatar Sports Investments took over the club in June 2011, PSG has spent several hundred million dollars on top-class players — including the likes of Zlatan Ibrahimovic, Marco Verratti and Edinson Cavani — in its effort to build a team capable of winning Europe's top club competition.

But the big names were not enough to bring success on the continental stage, and PSG has yet to make it through the quarterfinals of the Champions League under its Qatari owners.

Maybe that's about to change.

"I am extremely happy to join Paris Saint-Germain," Neymar said. "Since I arrived in Europe, the club has always been one of the most competitive and most ambitious. And the biggest challenge, what most motivated me to join my new teammates, is to help the club to conquer the titles that their fans want."

It's a mission that is clearly shared by the club's top management.

"Neymar Jr is today one of the very best players in world football. His winning mentality, strength of character and sense of leadership have made him into a great player," PSG president Nasser Al-Khelaifi said. "He will bring a very positive energy to this club."

"In six years, we have built a very ambitious project that has already taken us to the highest level of national and European football. Today, with the arrival of Neymar Jr, I am convinced that we will come even closer, with the support of our faithful fans, to realizing our greatest dreams."

PSG's announcement put an end to a saga that started about two weeks ago with rumors of his possible transfer, though the club had already tried to lure him to the City of Light last summer.

Neymar is expected in Paris on Friday and will hold a news conference early in the afternoon, PSG said.

He might make his debut on Saturday when PSG starts its new league campaign against promoted Amiens at the Parc des Princes.

Not surprisingly, his transfer has not gone down well in Spain.

In a statement, Barcelona said "the club will pass on to UEFA the details of the above operation so that they can determine the disciplinary responsibilities that may arise from this case."

The comment followed a claim by Spanish league president Javier Tebas on Wednesday that Neymar's move would break Financial Fair Play rules introduced by UEFA, European soccer's ruling body.

Barcelona did all it could to stop Neymar from leaving, and had vowed to complain to UEFA if his seemingly untouchable release clause was triggered.

The payment of the release clause was the second attempt Neymar's representatives had made on Thursday to break his bond with Barcelona. Earlier in the day, his lawyer Juan de Dios Crespo had tried to deposit the enormous sum at the Spanish league's offices in Madrid, but he was turned away.

Tebas had told Spanish sports daily AS that he wouldn't let the league act as an intermediary to an operation that he, like Barcelona, believed violated UEFA's FFP rules. He had called PSG a "state-supported club." The club's Qatari owners are closely linked to the energy-rich ruling family.

Joseph Wilson reported from Barcelona.

Military scrambles for transgender policy after Trump tweets

By LOLITA C. BALDOR, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's tweets declaring transgender people unwelcome in the armed forces have plunged the Pentagon into a legal and moral quagmire, sparking a flurry of meetings to devise a new policy that could lead to hundreds of service members being discharged.

Months after officially allowing transgender troops to serve openly in the military, the department may be forced to throw out those who willingly came forward after being promised they'd be protected.

A team of military lawyers has been pulled together to deal with the matter, Adm. Paul Zukunft, the Coast Guard commandant, said at the Center For Strategic and International Studies this week. These lawyers are working with the White House to flesh out some of the issues, and they're bolstered by a Pentagon working group that had initially been set up to advance the implementation of the Obama administration's year-old repeal of a transgender ban.

Now, they must deal with whatever new post-tweet policy emerges, according to the officials, who weren't authorized to speak publicly on the matter and requested anonymity.

Pentagon chief spokeswoman Dana White confirmed that talks between the White House and the Pentagon to work out the details of a new transgender policy have begun. Although it's unclear what the result will be, the discussions illustrate that Trump's aides aren't writing off his three-tweet salvo last week as an isolated outburst but as guidance for an upheaval in one of the military's most sensitive equal rights questions.

Whatever the final policy, court challenges are likely. And the personnel, health care and fairness issues sure to ensue may compel some soldiers, sailors and others to hide their identities and live a lie to remain in the military.

It's a scenario that raises the specter of the now-defunct "don't ask, don't tell" policy that once governed gays in the military. While the 1993 compromise banned gay men and women from serving, it essentially safeguarded their places in the ranks as long as they kept their homosexuality hidden. More than 13,000 were discharged after the policy was enacted. While many others remained, they were forced to keep their sexuality in the closet.

Now, asks Sarah Warbelow, legal director for the Human Rights Campaign, "Are they going to go on a witch hunt?"

The Pentagon working group had been studying health care questions and how and when transgender people might be allowed to enlist. Now its members and the military's legal experts must contemplate

forcing out transgender troops, including many who have served multiple combat tours.

If Trump stands by his tweet and the Pentagon is told to begin discharging transgender service members, officials must address several questions: Who would be thrown out? What type of discharge would they receive? How long of a grace period would they have before leaving?

There also is no uniform method of tracking transgender troops across the services. That raises another challenge. Will the Pentagon target service members who have already asked to have their sex changed in the personnel system? Or would the crackdown expand to anyone who simply sought counseling on the issue?

Warbelow questioned where the effort would end. People could be scrutinized for how they look or dress. For example, she suggested, could female troops be suspect for wearing clothing considered "too masculine?"

Trump's tweets last week were direct. He said the government won't accept or allow transgender individuals to serve "in any capacity" in the military. "Our military must be focused on decisive and overwhelming victory and cannot be burdened with the tremendous medical costs and disruption that transgender in the military would entail," he wrote.

Estimates of the number of transgender troops in the service vary widely. A Rand Corp. study said roughly 2,500 transgender personnel may be serving in the active duty military, and 1,500 in the reserves. It estimated only 30 to 130 active duty troops out of a force of 1.3 million would seek transition-related health care each year. Costs could be \$2.4 million to \$8.4 million, it estimated.

The study found 18 other countries allow transgender people to serve openly in the military. "In no case was there any evidence of an effect on the operational effectiveness, operational readiness, or cohesion of the force," Rand said.

After Trump's tweets, Zukunft the commandant said, "the first thing we did is we reached out to all 13 members of the Coast Guard who have come out." But any reassurance Pentagon officials offered may prove hollow under a new policy.

Since last year, transgender service members have been able to serve openly in the military, receive medical care and start formally changing their gender identifications in the Pentagon's personnel system. About five weeks ago, Defense Secretary Jim Mattis gave military chiefs more time to determine if allowing transgender people to enlist would affect force readiness or effectiveness.

Trump's pronouncement triggered bipartisan denunciations. Military and other officials described it as the latest example of Trump's administration struggling to translate the commander-in-chief's Twitter proclamations into actual policy. Until the Pentagon gets a new policy directive in writing, Gen. Joseph Dunford, the Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman, and other military leaders have said nothing will change.

Weary from scandals, Brazilians shrug at probe of president

By PETER PRENGAMAN, Associated Press

BRASILIA, Brazil (AP) — People across Latin America's largest nation collectively shrugged Thursday as they came to terms with President Michel Temer's latest victory in his struggle to remain in office despite a bribery charge against him and abysmal poll ratings.

People interviewed in three of the country's largest cities said they were angry and deeply frustrated at a political class that appears more interested in protecting its own than in listening to the will of voters or combatting the graft at all levels that has longed plagued Brazil.

Yet they also expressed weariness after years of scandals, political wrangling and large protests that have not led to an appreciable change.

"Brazil has become a dictatorship-type democracy," said Cesio Lucas Araujo, a fruit vendor working a few miles from Congress in Brasilia. "Politicians do what they want and steal, and we can't do anything about it."

That lack of energy was apparent Wednesday when the Chamber of Deputies spent all day debating whether to suspend Temer and put him on trial for allegedly plotting to receive millions in illicit payments

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for helping a company with a business dispute. Outside Congress, about 30 people gathered for a protest against Temer. In Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, the country's two largest cities, similar demonstrations drew fewer than 200 people.

Those numbers stand in stark contrast to mobilizations in recent years that brought millions into the streets — to protest austerity measures by local governments, to call for the impeachment of former President Dilma Rousseff and even as recently as a few months ago to demand that Temer resign or be forced out.

One of the biggest drivers of apathy these days is the country's economic crisis. Brazil recently emerged from its worst recession in decades, but even modest growth hasn't reined in rising unemployment and general fear about the future.

"People need money to feel like they can go into the streets and protest, and right now they don't have it," said Cassio Gilmar, who now sells newspapers in Rio because the import-export business he used to run has dried up. "Brazilians wanted the investigation (against Temer) to go forward, but our representatives thought otherwise."

The latest national poll said 80 percent of Brazilians surveyed favored Temer being put on trial — and just 5 percent approved of the job he is doing.

Temer, then vice president, took office a year ago after Rousseff was impeached and removed as president for improperly handling government finances. His administration has been hit by repeated scandals, but the 76-year-old career politician has been able to press ahead with unpopular legislation, such as a loosening of labor rules and proposals to trim pension benefits.

A longtime presiding speaker of the Chamber of Deputies and adept at wielding the levers of power, Temer worked strenuously to shore up support as he faced the bribery charge. In the last two months, his administration has doled out hundreds of millions of dollars for the districts of many legislators while also making promises of political appointments.

In the end, Temer held together enough of his governing coalition to survive Wednesday's vote, even though his unpopularity made it difficult for supporters. Few deputies spoke up for him during the nationally televised session, which came as the lawmakers look ahead to next year when all 513 seats of the lower house are up for election.

The chamber voted 263-227 against suspending Temer and sending him for trial before Brazil's highest court. The result effectively stalled the bribery charge, though Attorney General Rodrigo Janot is expected to come forward with a separate obstruction of justice charge that would force another vote on whether to try Temer.

One of the biggest arguments of legislators supporting the president was similar to what many average Brazilians say: For the sake of stability, particularly in the economy, it is better to stick with Temer and wait for elections next year.

The bribery allegation was another in a flood of scandals from a mammoth investigation into kickbacks that has led to the jailing of many of Brazil's elite the last three years. The attorney general alleged Temer orchestrated a scheme in which he would get millions of dollars for helping resolve a business issue for JBS, a giant meatpacking company. A former aide was arrested while carrying a suitcase with \$150,000, much of which was allegedly destined for Temer.

The president denies the allegation and says there is no proof he received any money.

Thanking the chamber for its "eloquent decision," Temer said late Wednesday that it is time for his government to return its focus to boosting the economy.

"I won't rest until Dec. 31, 2018," he said, referring to the end of his term.

Sonia Caetano, a secretary at a consulting firm who was window-shopping at a mall in Sao Paulo, said the vote made a mockery of the justice system.

"It strengthened the culture of impunity that prevails in this country where anyone with the right connections and money can do almost anyone he wants and get away with it," she said.

She concluded: "He is guilty of corruption and should be tried."

Associated Press writers Liliana Michelena in Rio de Janeiro and Stan Lehman in Sao Paulo and AP video journalist Renata Brito in Brasilia contributed to this report.

Peter Prengaman on Twitter: www.twitter.com/peterprengaman

Trump promotes technology to improve veterans' health care

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump announced new efforts Thursday to use technology to improve veterans' health care, saying the programs will greatly expand access, especially for mental health care and suicide prevention. Veterans living in rural areas will also benefit, he said.

Initiatives include using video technology and diagnostic tools to conduct medical exams. Veterans also will be able to use mobile devices to make and manage appointments with Veterans Administration doctors.

"We call it 'anywhere to anywhere' VA health care," VA Secretary David Shulkin said. Shulkin said the goal is better health care for veterans wherever they are. He said existing "telehealth" programs provided care to more than 700,000 veterans last year.

A medical doctor, Shulkin wore his white coat to the White House announcement, during which he demonstrated the technologies for Trump.

Trump said, "This will significantly expand access to care for our veterans, especially for those who need help in the area of mental health, which is a bigger and bigger request, and also in suicide prevention. It will make a tremendous difference for the veterans in rural locations in particular."

A regulation will need to be issued for these services to be provided anywhere in the country.

Shulkin was the VA's undersecretary for health in the final years of the Obama administration.

Associated Press writer Ken Thomas contributed to this report.

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

Scientists ID tiny prehistoric sea worm with 50 head spines

BY SETH BORENSTEIN, AP Science Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Long before dinosaurs roamed the Earth, a bizarre creature with a Venus flytrap-like head swam the seas.

Scientists have uncovered fossils of a tiny faceless prehistoric sea worm with 50 spines jutting out of its head. When some unsuspecting critter came too close, its jaw-like spines snapped together and dinner was served.

The discovery reported in Thursday's journal *Current Biology* offers a glimpse into the Cambrian explosion of life on Earth about 541 million years ago.

The new creature dubbed *Capinatator praetermissus* is so different that scientists said the fossils represent not only a new species, but a new genus — a larger grouping of life — as well.

It was only 4 inches long and its spines were about one-third of an inch long. It feasted on smaller plankton and shrimp-like creatures.

It is an ancestor of a group of marine arrow worms called chaetognatha that are abundant in the world's oceans. The prehistoric version was larger and with far more spines in its facial armory but without the specialized teeth of its descendants, said Derek Briggs of Yale University who led a team that discovered the trove of fossils in two national parks in British Columbia, Canada.

"The spines are like miniature hooks, although more gently curved. They were stiff rather than flexible," Briggs said in an email. "It's hard to say why there are so many spines in the fossil example — but presumably thus armed it was a successful predator."

Capinatator — whose name translates to grasping swimmer — lived 500 million years ago at a time when

creatures started getting bigger and more diverse. It's difficult to find complete fossils belonging to the chaetognatha family because they decayed easily, said Briggs. This latest find, however, was so good that even soft tissue was saved, giving scientists a good idea about what Capinatator looked like.

The discovery expands scientists' knowledge of a "pretty enigmatic" group of animals from the Cambrian era, said Smithsonian paleobiologist Doug Erwin, who had no role in the research.

Follow Seth Borenstein on Twitter at @borenbears . His work can be found here .

2 men charged with terrorism in Australian plane plot

SYDNEY (AP) — Two men were charged with terrorism offenses in Australia on Thursday in connection with an alleged plot to bring down an airplane, police said.

The men, ages 49 and 32, were each charged with two counts of planning a terrorist act, Australian Federal Police said in a statement. They were among four men arrested during a series of raids in Sydney on Saturday in connection with what authorities described as a credible threat to bring down a plane.

A third man remains in custody but has not yet been charged, while the fourth man was released without charge on Tuesday.

Officials have provided few details of the alleged plot, including the precise nature of the threat or any airlines involved. On Tuesday, the United Arab Emirates' national airline, Etihad Airways, said it was working with Australian police in the investigation, suggesting one of its planes may have been targeted. Etihad refused to confirm, however, if it had been a target.

Earlier Thursday, Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull said there was no longer any threat to Australia's aviation industry from the alleged plot.

Turnbull said the country's intelligence agency is restoring the aviation threat level to what it was before the men were arrested.

"The threat to aviation from the plot that was uncovered to bring down a plane has been disrupted and contained," Turnbull told reporters in Perth.

Security was increased at all major Australian international and domestic terminals following the arrests, leading to massive lines and delays for travelers. On Thursday, Turnbull said while enhanced security measures will continue, they will be modified to reduce delays. He declined to offer any details on what changes will be made.

Passengers this week were urged to arrive at airports an hour earlier than they normally would, but Turnbull said he expected the suggested arrival times to return to normal within the next day.

Ex-bodyguard: Diana would have 'loved' candid documentary

By JILL LAWLESS, Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Producers of a new documentary about Princess Diana say it offers insight. Critics say it's nothing but exploitation. But a former bodyguard says Diana would have been pleased that candid recordings of her are being broadcast in Britain for the first time.

Friends of the late princess have slammed a British broadcaster's decision to air private recordings in which she speaks frankly about her unhappy marriage to Prince Charles, commenting on their sex life, her fury at her husband's mistress and her love for another man.

Yet Ken Wharfe, Diana's protection officer between 1986 and 1993, says the princess who died in 1997 would appreciate the chance to be heard.

"She would love it," Wharfe told the Associated Press in an interview Wednesday. "For the first time, she would say, 'people are actually listening to and hearing what I am saying.'"

Wharfe also serves as a commentator in the documentary.

Diana was a huge star in her lifetime — at once princess, style icon, charity worker and tabloid celebrity — and has rarely been out of the news since her shocking death in a Paris car crash 20 years ago this month. But she has usually been seen through the eyes and words of others.

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"Diana: In Her Own Words," which airs Sunday on Channel 4, includes portions of recordings made by Diana's voice coach Peter Settelen in 1992 and 1993, just after Diana and Charles separated.

They divorced in 1996, and Charles married his longtime paramour Camilla Parker Bowles in 2005.

Portions of the tapes were broadcast by U.S. network NBC in 2004 but they have never been shown in Britain.

The tapes were made to help Diana practice public speaking as she struck out on her own in a career devoted to charity work. On camera, she seems relaxed and keen to tell her side of the story.

She recounts Charles' awkward attempts to woo her — "He chatted me up like a bad rash" — and says of the couple's sex life: "Once every three weeks and then it fizzled out."

Diana discusses her battle with bulimia, saying: "I didn't think I was good enough for this family, so I took it out on myself."

Diana also talks about falling "deeply in love" in the 1980s with her bodyguard Barry Mannakee, who later died in a motorcycle accident.

"That was the biggest blow in my life," Diana says.

She also describes confronting her husband and Parker Bowles at a party — a moment that Wharfe said marked "the real beginning of the end" of the royal marriage.

"She realized there was no chance of reconciliation," he said. "There was only one direction and that was divorce."

The intimacy of the conversations has drawn criticism from some people close to Diana. Her friend Rosa Monckton said the material "doesn't belong in the public domain."

"It is a betrayal of her privacy and of the family's privacy," she told The Guardian newspaper.

The office of Diana's sons, Prince William and Prince Harry, has declined to comment on the program.

Channel 4 said the tapes are "important historical source" and the subjects covered "a matter of public record."

The videotapes have had a twisting journey to public view. They were seized by British police during a 2001 raid on the home of Diana's former butler, Paul Burrell, who was accused of stealing from the princess.

The case against Burrell was later abandoned. Diana's family made a legal claim to the recordings but they were eventually returned to Settelen.

Wharfe — who has a book coming out next week on his time with the princess — says the documentary is a valuable reminder of Diana's role in "the reshaping of the monarchy."

Her death unleashed a public outpouring of grief in Britain and around the world. The royal family, whose stoic reserve suddenly seemed out of touch, has since softened its stiff upper lip.

William and Harry have both campaigned for more open discussion of mental health, and have spoken of their own struggles after their mother's death when they were only 15 and 12.

"They are picking up exactly where their mother left off," Wharfe said. "In my view, the queen — to this day — and other members of the royal family have a lot to thank Diana for."

Trump attorney brings 'street fighter' spirit to his work

By ERIC TUCKER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — One of the key lawyers in President Donald Trump's corner navigated a popular United States senator through crisis, produced a damning investigative report that drove a baseball star from the game and, early in his career, took on organized crime as a Justice Department prosecutor.

John Dowd, a retired Marine Corps captain and longtime legal adviser to prominent people facing government investigations, has played a role in some of the defining legal quagmires of the last four decades — among them, the Iran-Contra affair, the Keating Five, the Enron collapse and a scandal over the firing of U.S. attorneys.

It's no surprise that such battle-tested experience would be attractive to a White House needing legal talent to grapple with investigations into potential Russia ties by congressional committees and Special Counsel Robert Mueller. And his scorched-earth, aggressive professional style and a bombastic streak — he

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once cursed at a journalist who approached him for comment and is currently being sued for defamation by Pete Rose— is in some ways keeping with the president's own pugnaciousness.

"He's a fighter, he's a street fighter," said veteran Washington lawyer Brendan Sullivan, who has known Dowd for decades. "And he tempers it all with good judgment. He finds solutions to problems — which is what lawyers should be doing."

Dowd assumed a more prominent place on the legal team after another lawyer, Marc Kasowitz, took a reduced role. The lawyers have been evaluating potential conflicts of interest among Mueller's team, including the political affiliation of investigators and past work history, people familiar with the effort have said. The White House has also acquired a new special in-house counsel, respected attorney Ty Cobb, as it confronts legal probes that have shadowed the administration and stunted its agenda.

It's a challenging assignment given Trump's tendencies, on Twitter and in interviews, to act as his own adviser and to undercut conventional legal wisdom through hasty proclamations and actions.

But in an interview with The Associated Press, Dowd contended that "all clients have personalities that they bring to the table" and rejected the public perception of the president as a difficult client. Despite his own aggressive lawyering, including a history of occasionally combative language about investigations involving his own clients, Dowd said he knew how to adapt his own style to the circumstances of a case.

"It's true that there are circumstances where you have to fight like hell, and I do," Dowd said. And "there are circumstances where a jar of honey works very well."

For Dowd, who grew up inspired by tales of legendary lawyer Clarence Darrow, the Trump case is the most high-profile assignment in a career that's had many.

He was retained by Major League Baseball to investigate Rose on gambling allegations and concluded in a comprehensive and thorough report that the player had indeed bet on the sport. The 1989 document known as the Dowd Report, which relied on telephone and bank records and extensive interviews, led to Rose being banned from the game.

Around the same time, he was by the side of Sen. John McCain during the Keating Five banking scandal in which a group of lawmakers, including the Arizona Republican, accepted contributions from a wealthy banker ultimately accused of swindling investors. Though McCain expressed contrition as he ran for president in 2008, Dowd struck a more defiant tone, telling reporters on a conference call before the election that the senator was the "victim of a classic political smear job."

He's been similarly protective of other high-profile clients, representing a witness who secured an immunity deal in the Iran-Contra affair and a Justice Department official who exercised her Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination in refusing to answer questions from Congress. Earlier in his career, he served on a Justice Department organized crime task force and says he tried the first prosecution of the federal racketeering conspiracy, or RICO, statute.

Lawyers who have worked with Dowd describe him as savvy and experienced, fiercely protective of his clients, proud of his military background and eager to confront the government in court.

Most recently, he was the trial attorney for Raj Rajaratnam, a hedge fund founder convicted in 2011 of insider trading. Lawyers involved in the case say Dowd ran a disciplined defense team that fought for years, filing dozens of motions, accusing investigators of knowingly making false statements and misrepresenting evidence, and working strenuously but ultimately unsuccessfully to keep damaging wiretap evidence out of the trial.

He's made occasional headlines for conduct outside of court, too.

He was recorded on camera cursing and extending a middle finger at a journalist who approached him for comment outside the courthouse during the Rajaratnam case. After Dowd was identified in June as part of Trump's legal team, Preet Bharara — the former U.S. attorney in Manhattan whose office tried the Rajaratnam case and who was fired by Trump — tweeted to his followers a video of the exchange.

Dowd was sued by Rose in federal court last year after intimating in a radio interview that Rose had underage girls sent to him during baseball spring training. Dowd sought to have the case dismissed, but a judge has allowed elements of the suit to move forward. An unidentified woman submitted a court filing Monday saying that she had a sexual relationship with Rose in the 1970s starting when she was 14 or 15.

Rose has acknowledged having a relationship with the woman beginning when she was 16, the age of consent in Ohio, and his lawyer said the woman's claims are unverified.

Dowd's supporters say the ex-military man with the blunt speaking style and fighting spirit might be a comfort to Trump during a legal fight that threatens the heart of his administration.

"He's an old Marine, and in a difficult hour, he's who you want in your corner, I'll say that," said Washington lawyer Jim Sharp.

Cannabis company plans to turn desert town into pot paradise

By JOHN LOCHER and JOHN ROGERS, Associated Press

NIPTON, Calif. (AP) — Now that one of the nation's largest cannabis companies has bought the entire California desert town of Nipton, a question remains: Will the new owners rename the place Potosylvania? The name Weed already belongs to an old mill town in Northern California.

American Green Inc. announced Thursday it is buying all 80 acres of Nipton, which includes its Old West-style hotel, a handful of houses, an RV park and a coffee shop. Its plans are to transform the old Gold Rush town into what it calls "an energy-independent, cannabis-friendly hospitality destination."

The town's current owner, Roxanne Lang, said the sale is still in escrow, but confirmed American Green is the buyer. She declined to reveal price before the sale closes, but noted she and her late husband, Gerald Freeman, listed the property at \$5 million when they put it up for sale last year.

Asked what her husband would think of the buyers' plans to turn Nipton into the pot paradise of the California desert, she laughed heartily.

"I think he would find a lot of humor in that," she finally said, adding that as a Libertarian Freeman had no problem with people using marijuana, and as a proponent of green power he'd be all in favor of energy independence. Over the years he'd installed a solar farm himself that provides much of the tiny town's electricity.

American Green says it plans to expand that farm and also bottle and sell cannabis-infused water from Nipton's plentiful aquifer, joint moves that would make the town green in more ways than one.

The buyers are also reaching out to edibles manufacturers and other pot-industry businesses, hoping they'll be interested in relocating to Nipton and bringing jobs with them.

The town's current residents number fewer than two dozen and one of its major sources of revenue is the California Lottery tickets the general store sells to people who cross the state line from Nevada because they can't buy them there.

"We are excited to lead the charge for a true Green Rush," David Gwyther, American Green's president and CEO, said in a statement. "The cannabis revolution that's going on here in the U.S. has the power to completely revitalize communities in the same way gold did during the 19th century."

Indeed it was a gold rush that created Nipton in the early 1900s when the precious metal was found nearby.

But by the time Freeman, a Los Angeles geologist who liked to look for gold in his spare time, discovered the place in the 1950s it was already a ghost town. Even worse it was 60 miles south of Las Vegas and 10 miles (16 kilometers) off the major highway that connects that city to Los Angeles.

"I like to say it's conveniently located in the middle of nowhere," jokes Lang.

Freeman bought the town in 1985 anyway and spent the next 30 years lovingly restoring its boutique hotel and general store, building canvas-covered "eco cabins" and stocking them with wood-burning stoves and swamp coolers.

The small hotel has become a popular destination with desert aficionados and fans of the Old West, even though it's located so close to a major rail line that moves freight between Los Angeles and Salt Lake City that guests are handed earplugs with their room keys.

Carl Cavaness, who works at the hotel, said Thursday the sale caught him by surprise. He said he hopes the new owners will let him and his wife stay.

"We like the quiet and solitude," the 53-year-old handyman said.

Locher reported from Nipton and Rogers reported from Los Angeles.

Workers at Mississippi Nissan plant casting ballots on union

By JEFF AMY, Associated Press

CANTON, Miss. (AP) — Workers at a Nissan auto assembly plant in Mississippi are voting on whether they want the United Auto Workers union to bargain for them.

Voting among roughly 3,700 production workers at Nissan Motor Co.'s Canton assembly complex concludes at 7 p.m. Friday. The National Labor Relations Board is conducting the secret-ballot election after workers filed for UAW representation in July.

The union has struggled to expand beyond its stronghold at Detroit automakers to foreign-owned plants, especially in the southern United States.

Pro-union workers say the UAW would protect them against arbitrary treatment, and bargain for better benefits and pay. Managers say the UAW would make the plant less economically competitive.

ALBATROSS OR PROTECTOR?

Opponents have focused on claims that the UAW has been an albatross for Detroit automakers, implicitly or explicitly blaming the union for struggles at Ford, General Motors and Fiat Chrysler. Mississippi Gov. Phil Bryant posted a picture of a bombed-out industrial building Wednesday night on his Facebook page, stating, "I hope the employees at Nissan Canton understand what the UAW will do to your factory and town. Just ask Detroit. Vote no on the union."

That's part of a line of reasoning that suggests a unionized Nissan might lay off employees or even close the \$3.3 billion plant it opened in 2003.

Union supporters, though, say it's unfair to blame them for the Detroit Three's troubles, saying managers made the decisions on what vehicles to produce and were slow to react to increased competition.

At least one Michigan congressman, Democratic U.S. Rep. Dale Kildee, has taken offense at Bryant's characterization. He says GM has invested billions in his district, which includes Flint, in the past decade. "When workers have a voice, middle-class families win," Kildee said.

ORGANIZING THE TRANSPLANTS

The UAW has failed to organize foreign-owned auto assembly plants in the United States, reducing the union's bargaining power in the industry as Detroit automakers lose market share and close plants. This is the first time workers in Canton have voted on a union, but their Nissan counterparts in Smyrna, Tennessee, rejected the UAW in 1989 and 2001. The UAW also lost a 2014 vote among all workers at Volkswagen in 2014 before winning a second vote among 160 maintenance technicians.

The UAW has failed in its efforts to represent workers at plants operated by Honda, Toyota, Mercedes and BMW. Since Mitsubishi closed its plant in Normal, Illinois, in 2016, no foreign-owned auto assembly plants employ workers broadly represented by the UAW.

POLITICAL OVERTONES

Bryant and Kildee are far from the only political actors to weigh in on the Nissan vote.

Former Vice President Joe Biden, independent U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont and Democratic National Committee Chairman Tom Perez are among the union backers.

In a videoconference Tuesday, Sanders told UAW supporters that the company should: "Start treating your workers with the respect and the dignity that they deserve. Give your workers a seat at the bargaining table. Give your workers the freedom to join a union, so that as a nation we can stop the race to the bottom."

Those opposing the union include Americans for Prosperity, the political arm of the conservative Koch brothers' network. The Mississippi chapter sent 25,000 mailers to Jackson-area homes saying "tell UAW

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'No Thanks,'" and has bought radio, billboard and internet ads. Business groups including Mississippi's chamber of commerce and the National Association Manufacturers have weighed in against the union.

Follow Jeff Amy at: <http://twitter.com/jeffamy> . Read his work at https://www.apnews.com/search/Jeff_Amy .

Asian stocks mixed as US jobs, politics in focus

By YOUKYUNG LEE, AP Business Writer

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — Most Asian stock markets were mixed Friday as investors awaited the monthly U.S. jobs report and developments in the U.S. probe into President Donald Trump's alleged ties to Russia.

KEEPING SCORE: Japan's Nikkei 225 fell 0.4 percent to 19,956.58 while South Korea's Kospi added 0.2 percent to 2,391.81. Hong Kong's Hang Seng index was flat at 27,530.06 and the Shanghai Composite Index advanced 0.3 percent to 3,281.97. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 was nearly flat at 5,731.40. Stocks in Singapore were lower but markets in Taiwan and other Southeast Asian countries advanced.

JOBS REPORT: The U.S. government is due to issue its July jobs report later Friday. Analysts forecast that American employers added 180,000 jobs and the unemployment rate ticked down to 4.3 percent. A higher figure would increase the likelihood of a December rate hike.

U.S. PROBE: Special Counsel Robert Mueller's decision to use a grand jury in an investigation into potential collusion between the Trump campaign and Russia was the latest headline-grabbing news. The use of a grand jury suggests that Mueller and his team will likely hear from witnesses and demand documents in coming weeks. While the move does not suggest any criminal charges are near or will necessarily be sought, the investigation is widely seen as a distraction and is not good news for markets.

ANALYST'S TAKE: "Politics come to the forefront once again with the latest development on the Trump-Russia probe. That said, equity markets continued with a semblance of calm awaiting Friday's U.S. jobs report while Asian markets are likely to see dull trading into the end of the week," Jingyi Pan of IG said in a commentary.

WALL STREET: U.S. stock markets finished mostly lower on Thursday. The Standard & Poor's 500 index shed 0.2 percent to 2,472.16. The Dow Jones industrial average notched its eighth gain in a row, adding 9.86 points, or less than 0.1 percent, to 22,026.10. The Nasdaq composite lost 0.4 percent to 6,340.34. The Russell 2000 index of smaller companies sank 0.5 percent to 1,405.23 after a sharp loss a day ago.

OIL: Benchmark U.S. crude lost 8 cents to \$48.915 per barrel in electronic trading on New York Mercantile Exchange. The contract dipped 56 cents, or 1.1 percent, to close at \$49.03 a barrel on Thursday. Brent crude, the international standard, dropped 14 cents to \$51.87 per barrel in London. It fell 35 cents to close at \$52.01 a barrel on Thursday.

CURRENCIES: The dollar rose to 110.10 yen from 110.04 yen. The euro strengthened to \$1.1877 from \$1.1870.

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Friday, Aug. 4, the 216th day of 2017. There are 149 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On August 4, 1892, businessman Andrew Borden and his wife, Abby, were axed to death in their home in Fall River, Massachusetts. Lizzie Borden, Andrew's daughter from a previous marriage, was accused of the killings, but acquitted at trial.

On this date:

In 1782, composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart married Constanze Weber at St. Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna.

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In 1790, the U.S. Coast Guard had its beginnings as President George Washington signed a measure authorizing a group of revenue cutters to enforce tariff and trade laws and prevent smuggling.

In 1792, English romantic poet Percy Bysshe Shelley was born at Field Place near Horsham, England.

In 1830, plans for the city of Chicago were laid out.

In 1914, Britain declared war on Germany for invading Belgium; the United States proclaimed its neutrality in the mushrooming world conflict.

In 1936, Jesse Owens of the U.S. won the second of his four gold medals at the Berlin Olympics as he prevailed in the long jump over German Luz Long, who was the first to congratulate him.

In 1942, the Irving Berlin musical "Holiday Inn," starring Bing Crosby, Fred Astaire and Marjorie Reynolds, and featuring the song "White Christmas," premiered in New York.

In 1944, 15-year-old diarist Anne Frank was arrested with her sister, parents and four others by the Gestapo after hiding for two years inside a building in Amsterdam. (Anne and her sister, Margot, died at the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp.)

In 1964, the bodies of missing civil rights workers Michael Schwerner, Andrew Goodman and James Chaney were found buried in an earthen dam in Mississippi.

In 1977, President Jimmy Carter signed a measure establishing the Department of Energy.

In 1987, the Federal Communications Commission voted 4-0 to abolish the Fairness Doctrine, which required radio and television stations to present balanced coverage of controversial issues.

In 1991, the Greek luxury liner Oceanos sank in heavy seas off South Africa's southeast coast; the 402 passengers and 179 crew members all survived, largely through the efforts of ship's entertainers who oversaw rescue operations. (Capt. Yiannis Avranas and other officers faced criticism for leaving the ship while some passengers were still on board.)

Ten years ago: President George W. Bush toured the site of a collapsed highway bridge in Minneapolis, pledging to cut red tape that could delay rebuilding. Three students, Iofemi Hightower, Terrance Aerial and Dashon Harvey, were shot to death execution-style in a Newark, New Jersey, schoolyard. (Six people have since been sentenced to long prison terms.) NASA launched the Phoenix Mars Lander, a robotic dirt and ice digger, toward the red planet (it arrived in May 2008). Barry Bonds tied Hank Aaron's 755 career home runs as his San Francisco Giants lost 3-2 to the San Diego Padres. Alex Rodriguez became at age 32 the youngest player in major league history to date to hit 500 home runs with a first-inning homer in a 16-8 Yankees victory over Kansas City.

Five years ago: Michael Phelps won the 18th Olympic gold medal of his career as the United States won the medley relay at the London Games. The United States set a world record to win the women's medley relay. Serena Williams beat Maria Sharapova 6-0, 6-1 to join Steffi Graf as the only women to complete the Golden Slam — winning the Olympics and the four majors. Three British athletes won gold medals in Olympic Stadium: Jessica Ennis in heptathlon; Greg Rutherford in men's long jump; and Mo Farah in the men's 10,000 meters.

One year ago: Speaking to reporters at the Pentagon, President Barack Obama vigorously denied that a \$400 million cash payment to Iran was ransom to secure the release of four Americans jailed in Tehran. During a practice session on the eve of the Rio Olympics, South Korean gymnast Lee Eun-ju took a smiling selfie with North Korean gymnast Hong Un Jong in a warmly received scene captured by journalists.

Today's Birthdays: Actress-singer Tina Cole is 74. Actor-comedian Richard Belzer is 73. Football Hall of Famer John Riggins is 68. Former Attorney General Alberto Gonzales is 62. Actor-screenwriter Billy Bob Thornton is 62. Actress Kym Karath (Film: "The Sound of Music") is 59. Hall of Fame track star Mary Decker Slaney is 59. Actress Lauren Tom is 58. Former President Barack Obama is 56. Producer Michael Gelman (TV: "Live with Kelly & Ryan") is 56. Retired MLB All-Star pitcher Roger Clemens is 55. Actress Crystal Chappell is 52. Author Dennis Lehane is 52. Rock musician Rob Cieka (Boo Radleys) is 49. Actor Daniel Dae Kim is 49. Actor Michael DeLuise is 48. Race car driver Jeff Gordon is 46. Rapper-actress Yo-Yo is 46. Country singer Jon Nicholson is 44. Rhythm-and-blues singer-actor Marques (MAR'kus) Houston is 36. Actress Meghan Markle is 36. Actress Abigail Spencer is 36. Actress Greta Gerwig is 34. Country singer

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Crystal Bowersox (TV: "American Idol") is 32. Rock singer Tom Parker (The Wanted) is 29. Actors Dylan and Cole Sprouse are 25. Singer Jessica Sanchez (TV: "American Idol") is 22.

Thought for Today: "When you love someone, all your saved-up wishes start coming out." — Elizabeth Bowen, Irish author (1899-1973).