

# Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 10, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 041 ~ 1 of 48

## Thurs., Aug. 10, 2017

- 1- Recycling trailers
- 1- Sperry Stump Removal Ad
- 2- Chicken Soup of the Soul image
- 3- School Board Agenda
- 4- Kiwanis Club News
- 4- West Nile Update
- 5- Rep. Noem's Weekly Column
- 6- Sen. Thune's Weekly Column
- 7- Gov. Daugaard's Weekly Column
- 8- Sen. Rounds' Weekly Column
- 9- Home for Sale
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- 11- Today in Weather History
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- 14- Daily Devotional
- 15- News from the Associated Press

Thursday, Aug. 10

**Senior Menu:** Creamed chicken, buttermilk biscuit, peas, pineapple/mandarin orange sauce, peanut butter cookie.

Friday, Aug. 11

**Senior Menu:** Meat loaf, baked potato with sour cream, California blend veggies, fruited Jell-O salad, whole wheat bread.

# 12

4 p.m.: Girls soccer hosts Garretson

## Official Notices

Groton City (updated 8-8)

Other Notices (updated 8-8)

Groton Area School (updated 8-7)

Brown County (updated 8-7)

Frederick Area School Book (updated 7-26)

Westport Town Book (updated 7-26)

Frederick Town (updated 7-18)

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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**Sperry Stump Removal** Tyler: 605/216-8431  
**Over 30 Years of Combined Experience!**  
TJ: 605/380-7915 **TreeLine Tree Service**

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**“I believe we  
are one big  
family, and we  
need to help  
each other.”**

**- Jet Li -**

**Chicken Soup**  
for the **Soul.**

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## GROTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT #06-6

School Board Meeting August 14, 2017 – 7:00 PM – GHS Conference Room

### AGENDA:

1. Call to Order with members present. Approve agenda as proposed or amended.

POTENTIAL CONFLICTS DISCLOSURE PURSUANT SDCL 23-3

### CONSENT AGENDA:

1. Approval of minutes of July 10, 2017 school board meeting as drafted or amended.
2. Approval of minutes of July 24, 2017 school board meeting as drafted or amended.
3. Approval of minutes of July 31, 2017 special school board meeting as drafted or amended.
4. Approval of North Central Special Education Co-Op (NCSEC) agenda items...as fiscal agent.
5. Approval of July District bills for payment.
6. Approval of July Financial Report, Agency Accounts, and Investments.
7. Acknowledge receipt of Notification of Public School Exemption #18-01: Grade 10
8. Approve Open Enrollment Applications
  - a. #18-09 and #18-10: Grades 1 and 2 from Langford School District
  - b. #18-11 and #18-12: Grades 5 and 12 from Aberdeen School District

### OLD/CONTINUING BUSINESS:

1. Open Forum for Public Participation...in accordance with Board Policy & Guidelines.
2. School Board Committee Reports:
  - a. Building, Grounds, & Transportation: Clint Fjelstad, Merle Harder, Marty Weismantel
  - b. Personnel, Policy, & Curriculum: Deb Gengerke, Grant Rix
  - c. Negotiations: Kelly Kjelden, Steve Smith
3. Update on Elementary project progress.
4. Consider Elementary project change orders.
  - a. CCO#003: Add phone wire into Comm Rm 054
  - b. CCO#009: JDH Misc Field Work Orders – Paint Accent Walls; Masonry Patch Restrooms
5. Administrative Reports: (a) Superintendent's Report; (b) Principal's Reports; (c) Business Manager Report

### NEW BUSINESS:

1. Approve Amendment to Safe Routes to School Agreement for project PSRTS(27) PCN 03X0.
2. Approve hiring Melissa Ulmer, Elementary Librarian, for the 2017-2018 school year at \$11.40/hour.
3. Approve hiring Lisa Sippel, Elementary Special Education Aide, for the 2017-2018 school year at \$11.40/hour.
4. Approve hiring Jodi Schwan as Opportunities Room Counselor for the 2017-2018 school year at \$36,500.
5. Approve hiring Deb Tietz as part-time cook at \$11.40/hour.
6. Approve hiring Rita Kampa as part-time cook at \$11.40/hour.
7. Approve hiring Karen Johnson as part-time cook at \$11.40/hour.
8. Approve Chris Kucker and Doug Heinrich as Volunteer Assistant Girls Soccer Coaches for 2017 season.
9. Approve Sarah Schuster as Volunteer Assistant Volleyball Coach for 2017 season.
10. Approve Seth Erickson as Volunteer Assistant Football Coach for 2017 season.
11. Approve request from Langford Area School District to pick up students in Bristol and Andover for the 2017-2018 school year pursuant to SDCL 13-29-4.

### ADJOURN

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## GROTON KIWANIS CLUB

Fourteen members of the Groton Kiwanis Club at Wednesday's noon dinner meeting.

Roger Rix is chairmaning the 4 H Premium Sale, when collect donations from area businesses to help the 4 H, as a community booster project.

Lori Giedt and Chuck Padfield are chairmen of the annual tailgate supper, served before the Homecoming game in September.

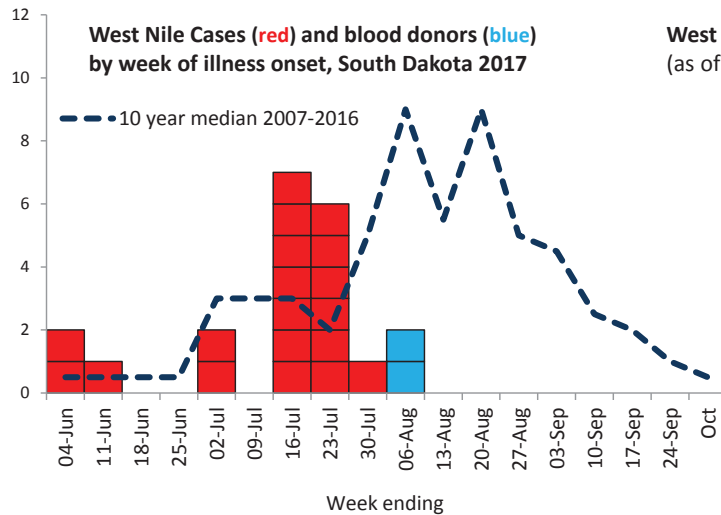
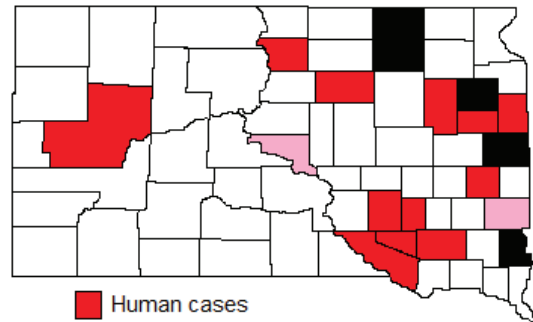
Lori Giedt was program chairman, and introduced Emily (Larson) Sternhagen, who runs the Kindermusic studio in her Groton home, at 504 E. 14th Ave. Ages 0-8 are accepted, and Emily usually has a class of 6-8 students in her classes. Many of her children are with her for 5-6 years.

Carson and Julie Larson of Columbia, are Emily's parents.

Next week's program chairman is Steve Giedt, followed by Mayor Scott Hanlon.

## West Nile update: South Dakota, 9 August 2017

- **19 human cases of West Nile virus disease have been reported to the SD Department of Health.**
- 26% of cases have neuroinvasive disease, 74% have West Nile Fever. 37% hospitalized
- **Counties with human WNV cases:** Aurora 1, Brookings 1, Charles Mix 1, Clark 1, Codington 4, Davison 1, Deuel 1, Douglas 1, Faulk 1, Hamlin 1, Hutchinson 1, Lake 1, Lincoln 2, Meade 1, Walworth 1.
- **Viremic blood donors:** 2, both in Brown County.
- **Deaths:** 0.
- **Counties with WNV positive mosquito detections:** Brookings, Brown, Codington, Hughes, Lincoln and Minnehaha.



West Nile virus activity reported to CDC, by state — United States, 2017 (as of 8 August, 2017)



SD Department of Health phone 800-592-1861  
 SD Department of Health: <http://westnile.sd.gov>  
 SDSU WNV risk assessment: <http://mosquito.sdstate.edu>  
 CDC West Nile: [www.cdc.gov/westnile](http://www.cdc.gov/westnile)



## It's been dry...

It's been dry to say the very least. Every county in the state has experienced this year's drought to some degree, with many facing severe or extreme conditions. Well over half of South Dakota's wheat is in poor or very poor condition, as is most of our barley, oats and alfalfa. Corn and soybeans are hurting too. Meanwhile, many pastures have been brown for some time, leaving ranchers with a severe feed shortage and forcing many to downsize their herds.

Every farmer and rancher understands agriculture is a risky business. You can have good crops for a decade, but one or two bad years can change everything. Times like this underscore the importance of providing a safety net to those who maintain our food supply.

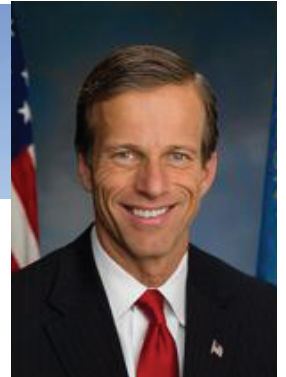
Earlier this month, I joined members of the House Agriculture Committee for a Farm Bill listening session where these safety nets were a primary focus. During the 2014 Farm Bill debate, I fought hard as a member of the final negotiating team to strengthen crop insurance and make the Livestock Forage Program permanent, because ranchers should have some certainty about the safety nets available when drought conditions leave wheat heads unfilled and pastures bare. At the same time, taxpayers deserve certainty too. By building safety-net programs like this into the budget rather than doing crisis-by-crisis emergency spending, we can better predict financial needs and avoid deficit spending.

Additionally, I've been pleased to see Secretary Perdue incrementally open South Dakota's CRP acres for haying and grazing, following a request I made to do so. He also allowed for certain CRP contract holders to donate their hay to livestock producers in drought-stricken counties. This relief was needed, but I believe this is an area where ranchers ought to have more certainty. In late July, I introduced the Donations in Rough Years (DRY) Act. This bill would permanently allow the hay harvested on certain CRP acres to be donated to ranchers struggling to meet their feed needs.

Droughts and fires can leave thousands of acres bare, while farmers and ranchers elsewhere are forced to destroy good hay. There's just no reason feed should be wasted. The DRY Act offers a commonsense solution. More specifically, the bill would allow for hay harvested in line with CRP management practices to be donated to ranchers suffering from a severe drought (categorized as D2 on the U.S. Drought Monitor) for eight weeks or an extreme drought (categorized as D3) for any length of time. If a presidential disaster is declared due to fire, ranchers would also be eligible to receive donated hay.

Too often, the federal government waits until a situation gets bad before figuring out how to deal with it. In situations where days matter – such as in the midst of a drought-induced feed shortage – relief can come too late. We should be more proactive. That's why it was important to fight to strengthen crop insurance and make livestock disaster programs permanent. It's also why I believe the DRY Act is necessary. It won't make the rain fall, but perhaps it can give a little peace of mind at a very unpredictable time.

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



## It's About Time

It was way back in August 1986 when President Reagan signed the last meaningful and comprehensive tax reform legislation into law. Randy Travis's "On The Other Hand" was at the top of the country music charts, Bo Jackson was the first overall pick in the NFL draft, and Kimberley and I were in our second year of marriage. Just think for a moment about everything that's changed in your own life over the last three decades: marriage, children, jobs, homes. Needless to say, reviewing, modernizing, and reforming our tax code is long overdue.

If you've ever flipped through the Internal Revenue Code – it's not a light read – you'd know just how big and overly complex it has become. Most folks wouldn't have to go to those lengths, though. For a lot of families, just filing their annual taxes can be a large enough burden. Even with online tax preparation programs and professional tax preparers, which nine out of 10 Americans now use, many people are still uncertain about their return's accuracy when they file it.

There's been a lot on the Senate's agenda this year, but I've been working hard to get a head-start on tax reform so we can hit the ground running when the Senate returns to Washington from its summer state work period. While I'm back in South Dakota, I plan on visiting different parts of the state to take my message about pro-growth tax reform directly to the people who would be affected. With a code as massive as the one we have in the United States, it's hard to find a single American whom tax reform wouldn't touch.

My goals for tax reform are actually pretty simple. For starters, I believe we must provide middle-class tax relief, simplify the code, and pursue reforms that increase wages, jobs, and economic growth in South Dakota. While creating an environment for new job growth is important, I also think tax reform must encourage employers to keep good-paying jobs here at home. Finally, whatever we do, we must improve and strengthen America's competitive edge in an ever-growing global economy. It's not just the nation's largest corporations, but also our hometown businesses that make up the supply chain that are at risk if America continues to fall behind in the global marketplace.

Setting these goals is the easy part. The hard, but necessary work of getting a bill on the president's desk comes next. I've already introduced several individual tax reform bills this year to help lay the groundwork for that effort. If you're interested in learning more about them, go to [www.thune.senate.gov](http://www.thune.senate.gov) and click on the tax reform icon on my homepage.

Over the next few weeks and months, I look forward to hearing from you and continuing to work with my colleagues on the Finance Committee as we work toward creating a tax system that works for South Dakotans, not against them.

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## The 2017 Sturgis Motorcycle Rally

It's almost rally time in South Dakota. What started in 1938 as a single motorcycle race in a small town has grown into one of the largest and best-known motorcycle gatherings in the world. This year is the 77th Annual Sturgis Motorcycle Rally, and though we don't expect the numbers will approach the levels we saw two years ago, the rally is sure to bring a crowd.

Motorcycle enthusiasts won't just be visiting Sturgis. They will be traveling all around the Black Hills – staying in our hotels and at our campgrounds, eating in our local restaurants, shopping in our stores and refueling at our gas stations. Each year the rally has a big economic impact on Sturgis and all of the Black Hills, and that creates benefits for our state too.

An event this size is not without its challenges. To help things go smoothly, the state has opened the Rally Operations Center and a Traffic Operations Center. Local law enforcement, the Highway Patrol and ambulance services will have additional personnel working during the rally.

Many state agencies will provide additional staff to support food safety, drinking water safety, fire safety, roadway safety, emergency communications, and vendor sales tax registrations and collections. National Guard soldiers will also be prepared in the event they are needed to respond to a large-scale disaster.

For the past 76 years, we've had no major emergency at the Sturgis Rally. Our goal is to get through the 77th rally with that record intact, but we need help.

We're asking South Dakotans to do their part to help make this a safe journey for our visitors. Drive carefully and be particularly mindful of the motorcycles on the road. Don't get distracted by electronic devices. It only takes one mistake to alter your life and someone else's forever. If you live in the Black Hills area, leave extra time to reach your destinations, and be patient with law enforcement and emergency responders. If something doesn't look right, let law enforcement know.

For those who are attending the rally, be careful and be prepared. Wear a helmet and proper riding attire. If you are driving a vehicle, wear your seatbelt. Most importantly, don't drink and drive.

Riders can visit [SouthDakotaRides.com](http://SouthDakotaRides.com) for real-time information and some helpful tips. On the website are links to weather updates, fire danger information, Twitter feeds from the departments of Transportation and Public Safety, and a map of hospital, urgent care and police station locations.

One of government's primary functions is to keep people safe. The state of South Dakota is ready to perform that responsibility and we welcome the opportunity to host so many visitors in our great state. If South Dakotans and our visitors do their part, it will go a long way toward helping make the 77th Sturgis Motorcycle Rally a safe and fun event.

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## The Sturgis Motorcycle Rally Rolls into Town

Every August, South Dakota welcomes hundreds of thousands of motorcyclists from across the country to participate in the annual Sturgis Motorcycle Rally. No single week in the entire year boasts a greater influx in the state's overall population than the week of the rally and the weeks before and after the rally. During this time, motorcyclists gather together in perhaps the largest bike gathering of all time.

What began as a single motorcycle race in 1938, the weeklong rally takes place in the small town of Sturgis in the Black Hills of Western South Dakota, a normally quiet town with a population of almost 7,000. During the week of the rally, however, Main Street Sturgis evolves into a bustling hub where motorcycle enthusiasts and other tourists come to enjoy like-minded company, entertainment, the South Dakota landscape and local food. The economic impact of the rally is impressive. A study conducted by the Rally Department of the City of Sturgis gauged the economic impact of the 2010 rally, which hosted 466,000 attendees, as generating roughly \$817 million dollars in economic activity for the state. That is just in one year.

The city of Sturgis benefits from the rally, but so does the entire state of South Dakota. Though the rally only lasts 10 days, visitors often like to extend their trip to explore the rest of the state. With the Black Hills National Forest, Badlands National Park, Mount Rushmore National Monument, the Mickelson Trail, Jewel Cave, historic Deadwood and the Crazy Horse Memorial all within biking distance of Sturgis, visitors can experience the fun and excitement of the rally one day and the pristine beauty of South Dakota's Black Hills the next.

While the Black Hills are a must-see for visitors to our state, opportunities for fun and adventure can be found in every part of South Dakota. In the central and eastern part of the state, a number of glacial lakes and reservoirs provide for top-notch fishing, especially if you're trying to catch walleye or smallmouth bass. Visitors to our great state often like to camp, kayak, canoe, hike, bike or golf during their vacation—all great ways to explore the land of infinite variety that is South Dakota.

Jean and I wish everyone attending this year's Sturgis Motorcycle Rally a safe and fun-filled trip. We hope that visitors will take some time to explore South Dakota's stunning landscapes and rich history while they're here in the land of great faces and great places.



## Home for Sale



**Comfortable, efficient and great location  
2006 home (28X44) with spacious deck and garage.  
\$95,000**

**Open House August 12th and 13th, 1:00 to 3:00**

**Contact Bob Walter 605-380-6804.**

**16 E 4th Ave., Groton**

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## Customer Appreciation Days

**Aug. 22 through Aug. 24**

**Specials All Week! Daily Drawings!**

**Tuesday is Coffee, cookies and cheese samples**

**Wednesday is bring your pet in for a treat**

**Thursday is beef sandwiches, beans and drink  
served from noon to 7 pm.**

**Ritchie Waterer rep Curt Weyh available  
to speak with on Thursday**

**Come let us show you **OUR**  
appreciation for your business**

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## Today in Weather History

August 10, 1886: An estimated F3 tornado moved southeast from 10 miles northwest of Aberdeen. This massive tornado destroyed four homes and a dozen barns. This is the earliest significant tornado on record for Brown County.

August 10, 2007: Several supercell thunderstorms developed along a frontal boundary during the evening bringing large hail, damaging winds, along with a couple of tornadoes. An EF0 tornado touched down north of Timber Lake with no damage reported. Another EF0 tornado touched down briefly north of Trail City with no damage occurring. Wakpala, in Corson County, and Mobridge saw golf ball sized hail. The hail broke some windows and damaged the siding on several houses in the Mobridge area.

1884: An earthquake, centered near New York City and registering a magnitude 5.5, hit the region a little after 2 PM. The tremor made houses shake, chimneys fall, and residents wonder what the heck was going on, according to a New York Times article two days later.

1856: A hurricane destroyed Isle Dernieres or Last Island, a pleasure resort south-southwest of New Orleans on this day. The highest points of the island were under five feet of water. The resort hotel was destroyed, along with the island's gambling establishments. Over 200 people perished, and the island lost all its vegetation and split in half. Only one cow remained on the island after the catastrophe. The Last Island is now only a haven for pelicans and other sea birds. The steamer Nautilus foundered during the storm. The lone survivor clung to a bale of cotton and washed ashore sometime later.

1926 - A hurricane came inland near Daytona Beach, FL. The hurricane caused 2.5 million dollars damage in eastern Florida, including the Jacksonville area. (David Ludlum)

1939 - The temperature at Lewiston, ID, hit 117 degrees to establish an all-time record high for that location. (The Weather Channel)

1943 - On a whim, and flying a single engine AT-6, Lieutenant Ralph O'Hair and Colonel Duckworth were the first to fly into a hurricane. It started regular Air Force flights into hurricanes. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Thunderstorms in Minnesota spawned a tornado which moved in a southwesterly direction for a distance of thirty miles across Rice County and Goodhue County. Trees were uprooted and tossed about like toys, and a horse lifted by the tornado was observed sailing horizontally through the air. Thunderstorms drenched La Crosse, WI, with 5.26 inches of rain, their second highest 24 hour total of record. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)








1988 - Hot weather prevailed in the north central U.S. Williston, ND, reported a record high of 108 degrees. Thunderstorms produced severe weather in the eastern U.S., and in southeastern Texas. Richland County, SC, was soaked with up to 5.5 inches of rain. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Thunderstorms produced locally heavy rains in the southwestern U.S. Yuma, AZ, experienced their most severe thunderstorm of record. Strong thunderstorm winds, with unofficial gusts as high as 95 mph, reduced visibilities to near zero in blowing dust and sand. Yuma got nearly as much rain in one hour as is normally received in an entire year. The storm total of 2.55 inches of rain was a record 24 hour total for July. Property damage due to flash flooding and high winds was in the millions. (Storm Data)

1989 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather from Wisconsin and northern Illinois to New England, with 103 reports of large hail and damaging winds through the day. Thunderstorms in Wisconsin produced hail three inches in diameter near Oshkosh, and wind gusts to 65 mph at Germantown. (The National Weather Summary)


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Today	Tonight	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday
						
Partly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy then Slight Chance T-storms	Chance T-storms	Chance T-storms	Slight Chance T-storms
High: 75 °F	Low: 52 °F	High: 78 °F	Low: 55 °F	High: 72 °F	Low: 54 °F	High: 73 °F

## Below Normal Temperatures Today


**Today**



Isolated Showers  
NE SD and Wrn MN

**Highs: 72-78**


**Friday**



Chance of evening  
storms in Wrn SD


Lows: 50-55  
**Highs: 75-82**

**Saturday**



Lows: 53-59  
**Highs: 70-75**

**Sunday**



Mainly NE SD  
and Wrn MN

Lows: 53-58  
**Highs: 71-76**



National Weather Service – Aberdeen, South Dakota

[www.weather.gov/abr](http://www.weather.gov/abr)



NWSAberdeen

Created: 8/10/2017 3:55 AM



@NWSAberdeen



Published on: 08/10/2017 at 4:04AM

Northerly winds will bring cooler temperatures to the area today, along with a partly to mostly cloudy sky. A few showers are possible to the east of the James River Valley today. Cooler temperatures will continue into the weekend, along with increasing chances for rain.

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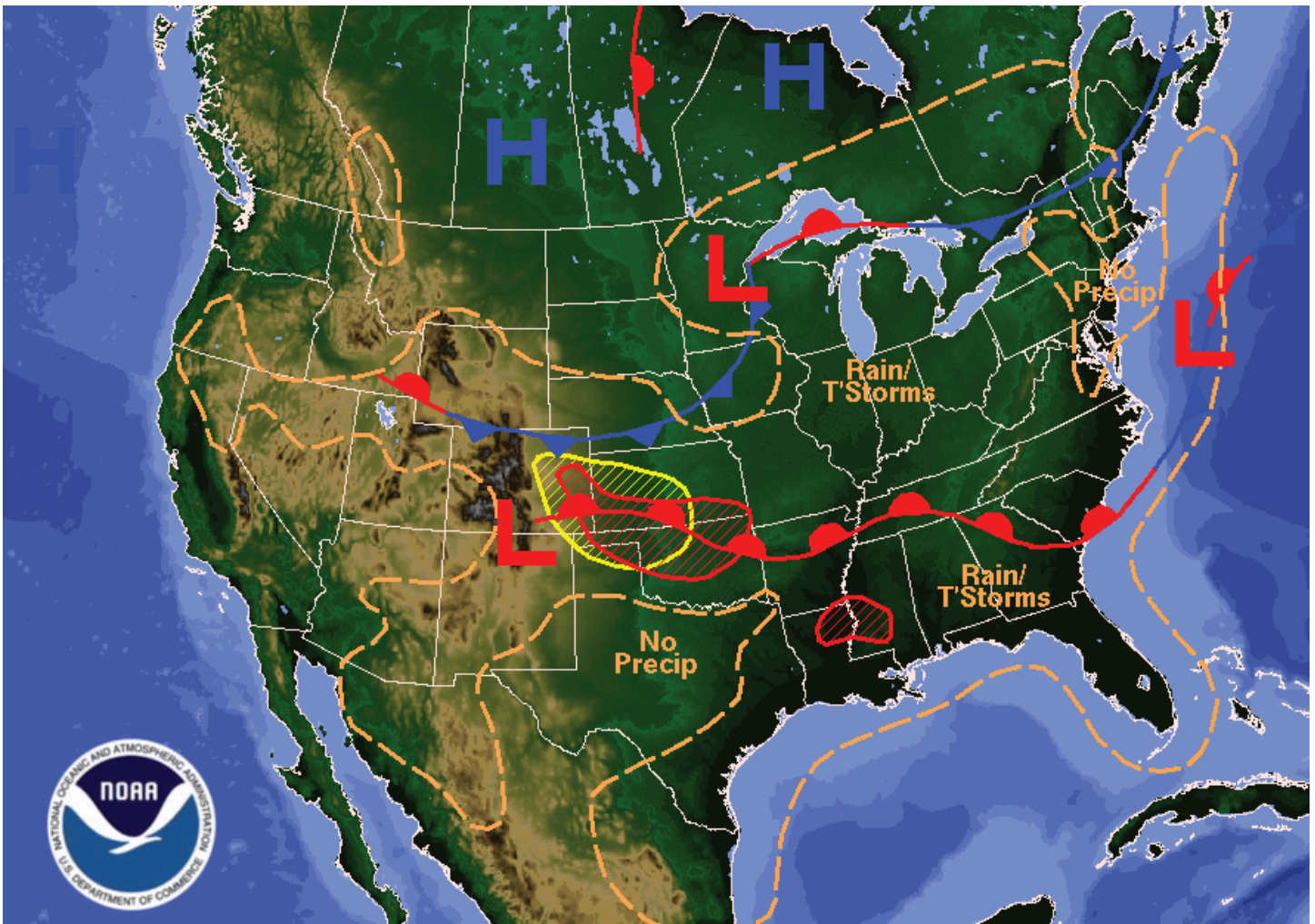
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## Yesterday's Weather

**High Outside Temp: 81.3 F at 2:59 PM**  
**Low Outside Temp: 58.2 F at 11:52 PM**  
**High Gust: 21.0 Mph at 4:45 PM**  
**Precip: 0.00**

## Today's Info

**Record High: 106° in 1947**  
**Record Low: 42° in 1985**  
**Average High: 83°F**  
**Average Low: 58°F**  
**Average Precip in Aug: 0.79**  
**Precip to date in Aug: 0.78**  
**Average Precip to date: 14.65**  
**Precip Year to Date: 8.13**  
**Sunset Tonight: 8:48 p.m.**  
**Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:29 a.m.**



### Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Thu, Aug 10, 2017, issued 4:50 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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## A STRAIGHT LINE

When the first railroad was built in Russia, the Czar wanted train tracks to be laid from Moscow to another city that he enjoyed visiting.

"Where do you want me to lay the tracks?" asked the engineer, unrolling a map before him.

After thinking for a moment, the Czar took a ruler and drew a straight line across the map from Moscow to that particular city and said loudly, "There!"

The Lord has drawn a "straight line." We find it in His Word. It is a line that begins at our feet, goes through the cross and ends with Him in heaven. But that line is often difficult to follow. Even for King David.

"I acknowledged my sin to You and did not cover up my iniquity," he wrote. Acknowledging this "sin" must have been difficult for him to confess. Hear his cry, "Day and night Your hand was heavy upon me." He could find no relief from his guilt and God would not give him any peace. "Day and night your hand was heavy on me."

When we sin and do not repent or ask God for His forgiveness, we can expect – and be thankful for – His "heavy hand on" us. Sometimes we "feel" His hand when we are emotionally unsettled, going through a period of sickness or sensing feelings of alienation. How fortunate we are – for this is God speaking to us, trying to get our attention because He wants us to "confess our sins." Then He will remove our guilt, restore His peace and renew our relationship with Him.

Prayer: Thank you, Father, for giving us a conscience that forces us to look at the sin in our lives and repent. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 32:5 Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD." And you forgave the guilt of my sin.

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## News from the Associated Press

### SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

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

Dakota Cash  
10-14-15-20-33  
(ten, fourteen, fifteen, twenty, thirty-three)  
Estimated jackpot: \$438,000

Hot Lotto  
11-20-23-30-34, Hot Ball: 8  
(eleven, twenty, twenty-three, thirty, thirty-four; Hot Ball: eight)  
Estimated jackpot: \$9.12 million

Mega Millions  
Estimated jackpot: \$382 million

Powerball  
12-30-36-47-62, Powerball: 9, Power Play: 4  
(twelve, thirty, thirty-six, forty-seven, sixty-two; Powerball: nine; Power Play: four)  
Estimated jackpot: \$307 million

### South Dakota senator to lead bipartisan legislative group

BOSTON (AP) — Republican state Sen. Deb Peters of South Dakota has become the National Conference of State Legislatures' 45th president.

The bipartisan organization that serves lawmakers and legislative staff nationwide said Wednesday that Peters succeeds Democratic Sen. Dan Blue of North Carolina. The conference annually alternates its leadership between the two parties.

Peters says she will work to address issues including taxation, health care and states' rights. She says she will also work to make sure federal policies are in line with state priorities.

Peters served in the South Dakota House starting in 2005 before joining the state Senate in 2011. She is chairwoman of the Government Operations and Audit Committee.

### South Dakota teen gets 15 years probation in school shooting

CANTON, S.D. (AP) — A South Dakota teenager accused of shooting and injuring his high school principal nearly two years ago has pleaded guilty to attempted murder.

A judge on Wednesday suspended all 25 years of Mason Buhl's sentence, with Buhl to serve 15 years on supervised probation. He will be committed to a mental health treatment program.

Authorities say Buhl brought a gun to Harrisburg High School on Sept. 30, 2015, and shot Principal Kevin Lein in the right arm. Buhl was tackled and restrained by two other high school staff members. No one else was hurt.

Buhl is now 18. He was charged as an adult with attempted murder and the commission of a felony while armed with a firearm.

Lincoln County State's Attorney Tom Wollman said earlier that Buhl was found competent to stand trial.

## **Attorney: Settlement of lawsuit against ABC exceeds \$177M**

**By JAMES NORD, Associated Press**

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A legal settlement between ABC and a South Dakota meat producer in a defamation lawsuit over the network's reports on a beef product that critics dubbed "pink slime" exceeded \$177 million, an attorney for the producer said Wednesday.

Disney, which owns ABC, disclosed a \$177 million legal settlement charge in a filing with a government securities regulator this week that didn't specifically link it to South Dakota-based Beef Products Inc. BPI attorney Dan Webb said that based on the disclosure, it appears Disney is funding \$177 million of the settlement and insurers are "paying the rest."

"As Disney disclosed, \$177 Million is not the total settlement amount," Webb said in a statement, which didn't give the full figure.

Disney reported in the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission filing that it's pursuing "additional insurance coverage for this matter." The company didn't immediately respond to an email requesting comment from The Associated Press.

BPI and ABC announced the settlement in June while the case was at trial. BPI could have been seeking damages as high as \$1.9 billion, according to the SEC filing from Disney.

BPI sued in 2012, saying ABC's coverage of its lean, finely textured beef product misled consumers into believing the product is unsafe, is not beef and isn't nutritious.

ABC spokeswoman Julie Townsend said in a June statement that throughout the case the network maintained its reports accurately presented the facts and views of "knowledgeable people" about the product.

The coverage emphasized that the product at the time was present in 70 percent of the ground beef sold in supermarkets, but wasn't labeled.

After the reports aired, some grocery store chains said they would stop carrying ground beef that contained the product. BPI claimed in the 2012 complaint that sales declined from about 5 million pounds (2.3 million kilograms) per week to less than 2 million pounds (907,000 kilograms) per week.

Lean, finely textured beef can be added to ground beef to reduce the overall fat content. It's made from trimmings left after beef cattle are butchered. The meat is separated from the fat, and ammonia gas is applied to kill bacteria.

Former Department of Agriculture microbiologist Gerald Zirnstein named the product "pink slime" in a 2002 agency email. He was among several people who were removed from the lawsuit before trial, including ABC anchor Diane Sawyer, leaving just the network and correspondent Jim Avila as defendants.

## **North Dakota Ag Department surveying for dicamba damage**

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — The state Agriculture Department is asking North Dakota farmers to report any suspected crop damage caused by the herbicide dicamba.

Dicamba kills broad-leafed weeds but also can damage or kill legumes. This year was the first that any dicamba products were registered for use on post-plant soybeans.

Whether herbicide drift is causing damage to soybean crops has been a topic in many states including both Dakotas this summer.

North Dakota Agriculture Commissioner Doug Goehring says his agency wants to quantify the number of potential damage reports and impacted acres through the survey. He says the information that's gathered won't be used for any enforcement actions.

## **North Korea details plan to fire missile salvo toward Guam**

**By ERIC TALMADGE, Associated Press**

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea has announced a detailed plan to launch a salvo of ballistic missiles toward the U.S. Pacific territory of Guam, a major military hub and home to U.S. bombers. If carried out, it would be the North's most provocative missile launch to date.



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The announcement Thursday warned that the North is finalizing a plan to fire four of its Hwasong-12 missiles over Japan and into waters around the tiny island, which hosts 7,000 U.S. military personnel on two main bases and has a population of 160,000.

Japan and South Korea vowed a strong reaction if the North were to go through with the plan.

It said the plan, which involves the missiles hitting waters 30 to 40 kilometers (19 to 25 miles) from the island, could be sent to leader Kim Jong Un for approval within a week or so. It would be up to Kim whether the move is actually carried out.

It is unclear whether — or exactly why — North Korea would risk firing missiles so close to U.S. territory. Such a launch would almost compel the United States to attempt an intercept and possibly generate further escalation.

North Korea, no stranger to bluffing, frequently uses extremely bellicose rhetoric with warnings of military action to keep its adversaries on their heels. It generally couches its threats with language stating it will not attack the United States unless it has been attacked first or has determined an attack is imminent.

But the statement raised worries amid threats from both sides.

Following reports that U.S. intelligence suggests the North might be able to pair a nuclear warhead with a missile capable of reaching targets on the United States mainland, President Donald Trump warned North Korea that “it faces retaliation with fire and fury unlike any the world has seen before.”

Pyongyang, meanwhile, has been louder in its complaints against a new and tough round of sanctions imposed by the United Nations, with strong U.S. backing, and Washington’s use of Guam as a staging ground for its stealth bombers, which could be used to attack North Korea and are a particularly sore point with the ruling regime in Pyongyang.

Its reported plan is extremely specific, suggesting it is actually plotting a launch.

The report said the Hwasong-12 rockets would fly over Shimane, Hiroshima and Koichi prefectures in Japan and travel “1,065 seconds before hitting the waters 30 to 40 kilometers away from Guam.” It said the Korean People’s Army Strategic Force will finalize the plan by mid-August, present it to Kim Jong Un and “wait for his order.”

“We keep closely watching the speech and behavior of the U.S.,” it said.

Such a move would not merely be a test launch, but a demonstration of military capabilities that could easily lead to severe consequences.

South Korea’s military responded by saying North Korea will face a “stern and strong” response from Washington and Seoul. Taking it a step further, Japan’s Defense Minister Itsunori Onodera told parliament a missile attack on the U.S. territory would be a Japanese national emergency because it would threaten Japan’s existence as a nation.

If North Korea were to actually carry it out — even if it aimed at hitting the waters off Guam and not the island itself — that would clearly pose a potential threat to U.S. territory and put the United States in a much more complicated situation than it has been during previous missile launches.

Guam lies about 2,100 miles (3,400 kilometers) from the Korean Peninsula, and it’s extremely unlikely Kim’s government would risk annihilation with a pre-emptive attack on U.S. citizens. It’s also unclear how reliable North Korea’s missiles would be against such a distant target, but no one was writing off the danger completely.

Washington has been testing its missile defenses in response to the North’s stepped-up development and the current escalation of tensions could lead to pressure for the U.S. military to try to shoot down the North’s missiles in midflight if they are heading toward Guam.

That would likely open up a set of very major problems, including the possibility of both a very high-profile failure or a miscalculation of Washington’s intentions and a more deadly pre-emptive strike by the North — which has missiles able to hit Tokyo and conventional weapons that could devastate South Korea’s capital of Seoul.

The Hwasong-12, which was revealed for the first time at a military parade in April, is an intermediate-range ballistic missile that is believed to have a radius of more than 3,700 kilometers (2,300 miles). It can

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be fired from mobile launchers, making it hard to detect and destroy on the ground.

By launching a salvo of four, the North would be attempting to make it harder for the U.S. to intercept all of the incoming missiles. Its stated flight path over Japan is also very aggressive — it has recently tried to avoid flying over neighboring countries by shooting its missiles up at a very high angle to land in the ocean.

Washington, meanwhile, has been giving out mixed signals about its intentions.

While Trump was threatening annihilation and boasting from the New Jersey golf resort where he's vacationing that he has made the U.S. nuclear arsenal "far stronger and more powerful than ever before," Secretary of State Rex Tillerson sought to calm the sense of crisis.

"Americans should sleep well at night," Tillerson told reporters. "Nothing that I have seen and nothing that I know of would indicate that the situation has dramatically changed in the last 24 hours."

## Rally Cat: Feline on field sets up Cardinals' grand slam

ST. LOUIS (AP) — The Cardinals have a friendly feline to thank for their rally against the Royals.

With the bases loaded and two outs in the sixth on Tuesday night, the game was delayed for a couple minutes when a small, feisty cat sprinted onto the field at Busch Stadium.

On the first pitch after play resumed, Yadier Molina hit a grand slam off Peter Moylan to give the Cardinals an 8-5 lead. The cat was instantly dubbed #RallyCat on Twitter, and St. Louis went on to win.

The cat emerged from near the visitors' dugout on the third-base side and blitzed into the outfield, the fur on its tail standing on end. Royals center fielder Lorenzo Cain stood, smiling, with a hand on his hip as the cat sprinted past him.

Lucas Hackmann, a member of the Cardinals' grounds crew, ran out to grab the stray and flinched several times as the animal tried to bite or scratch him.

More AP baseball: <https://twitter.com/tag/MLBbaseball>

## Guam's residents concerned but have faith in US military

By GRACE GARCES BORDALLO and AUDREY McAVOY, The Associated Press

HAGATNA, Guam (AP) — The tiny U.S. territory of Guam feels a strong sense of patriotism and confidence in the American military, which has an enormous presence on the Pacific island. But residents are increasingly worried over Washington's escalating war of words with North Korea.

The people of Guam woke up Thursday to another pointed threat from Pyongyang, which vowed to complete a plan to attack waters near the island by mid-August — adding a timeline to a threat from a day earlier that North Korea would create an "enveloping fire" around Guam.

Like other U.S. territories, Guam has a sometimes complicated relationship with the U.S. mainland but many across the island say despite the threats and concerns they feel reassured and protected by the military — especially in times of tense, geopolitical sparring.

About 160,000 people live on the island, which extends about 12 miles (19.31 kilometers) at its widest. The American military presence on Guam consists of two bases — Andersen Air Force Base in the north and Naval Base Guam in the south — which are home to 7,000 U.S. troops.

"I feel that the presence of the military on Guam will help us a lot," said Virgie Matson, 51, a resident of Dededo, Guam's most populated village. "They are here to protect the islands, just in case something happens."

The possibility of a nuclear confrontation is considered remote but international alarm has been escalating in recent days. In the latest development, Gen. Kim Rak Gyom, who heads North Korea's rocket command, said in a statement carried by state media that his country was "about to take" military action near Guam. He said the North would finalize a plan by mid-August to fire four mid-range missiles hitting waters 19 to 25 miles (30 to 40 kilometers) away from the island.

It's not the first time North Korea has threatened Guam, which is a crucial, strategic hub for U.S. forces in the Pacific.

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Andersen Air Force Base houses a Navy helicopter squadron and Air Force bombers that rotate to Guam from the U.S. mainland, including the B-2 stealth bomber, B-1 and B-52. Their location in a U.S. territory means its military is just hours from potential flashpoints in the western Pacific.

Naval Base Guam is an important outpost for U.S. fast-attack nuclear powered submarines that are a key means for gathering intelligence in the region, including off the Korean peninsula and in the South China Sea where China has been building military bases on man-made islands that have stirred tension across Asia.

The U.S. military has said it plans to increase its presence on Guam and will move thousands of U.S. Marines currently stationed in Japan to the island between 2024 and 2028.

"I'm pro military buildup," said resident Gus Aflague, 60, whose grandfather and brother both joined the U.S. Navy.

"North Korea has always threatened other countries. They threatened U.S., other countries, and they threaten Guam. It's a propaganda, that's how I feel," he said but added that the military offered an extra reassurance. "I feel safe with our military presence here — Andersen and the Navy."

There's a sense of patriotism among those who cite the island's history of Guam residents serving in the U.S. military. The U.S. took control of Guam in 1898, when Spanish authorities surrendered to the U.S. Navy.

During the Vietnam War, the Air Force sent 155 B-52 bombers to Guam to hit targets in Southeast Asia. Guam was also a refueling and transfer spot for people heading to Southeast Asia, and many refugees fleeing Saigon were evacuated through Guam.

But there's also some resentment about not being able to vote in the general election for U.S. president. Guamanians have served in all major U.S. wars since World War II and see military service as a source of pride. A huge red, white and blue ribbon is outside the airport terminal.

Resident Isaac Camacho, 19, says he feels Guam's relationship with the U.S. mainland is "a little misunderstood on their part."

"They believe that we are not true U.S. citizens, when we do have plenty of Chamorro people going into the U.S. military and serving for their country and dying for their country," he said. Chamorros are the indigenous people of Guam. "And not a lot of Americans know that."

Guam is about 2,100 miles (3,380 kilometers) southeast of Pyongyang and 3,800 miles (6,115 kilometers) west of Honolulu in the Pacific Ocean. For years, North Korea has claimed Guam is within its missiles' striking distance, making furious statements each time when the U.S. flew powerful bombers from the island's air base to the Korean Peninsula.

In August last year, the North's Foreign Ministry warned that all U.S. military bases in the Pacific including Guam would "face ruin in the face of all-out and substantial attack" by the North's military. In 2013, state media cited leader Kim Jong Un as having ordered his military to prepare plans on launching strikes on U.S. military bases in Guam, Hawaii and South Korea as well as the American mainland.

Guam is armed with the U.S. Army's defense system known as Terminal High Altitude Area Defense, or THAAD, which can intercept missiles.

McAvoy reported from Honolulu. Jennifer Sinco Kelleher in Honolulu and Jocelyn Gecker in San Francisco contributed reporting.

## Study: Trump actions trigger health premium hikes for 2018

By RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration's own actions are triggering double-digit premium increases on individual health insurance policies purchased by many consumers, a nonpartisan study has found.

The analysis released Thursday by the Kaiser Family Foundation found that mixed signals from President Donald Trump have created uncertainty "far outside the norm," leading insurers to seek higher premium increases for 2018 than would otherwise have been the case.

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The report comes with Republicans in Congress unable to deliver on their promise to repeal and replace the Obama-era Affordable Care Act. Trump, meanwhile, insists lawmakers try again. The president says "Obamacare" is collapsing, but he's also threatened to give it a shove by stopping billions of dollars in payments to insurers. Some leading Republicans are considering fallback measures to stabilize markets.

Researchers from the Kaiser foundation looked at proposed premiums for a benchmark silver plan across major metropolitan areas in 20 states and Washington, D.C. Overall, they found that 15 of those cities will see increases of 10 percent or more next year.

The highest: a 49 percent jump in Wilmington, Delaware. The only decline: a 5 percent reduction in Providence, Rhode Island.

About 10 million people who buy policies through HealthCare.gov and state-run markets are potentially affected, as well as another 5 million to 7 million who purchase individual policies on their own.

Consumers in the government-sponsored markets can dodge the hit with the help of tax credits that most of them qualify for to help pay premiums. But off-marketplace customers pay full freight, and they face a second consecutive year of steep increases. Many are self-employed business owners.

The report also found that insurer participation in the ACA markets will be lower than at any time since "Obamacare" opened for business in 2014. The average: 4.6 insurers in the states studied, down from 5.7 insurers this year. In many cases insurers do not sell plans in every community in a state.

The researchers analyzed publicly available filings through which insurers justify their proposed premiums to state regulators. To be sure, insurers continue to struggle with sicker-than-expected customers and disappointing enrollment. And an ACA tax on the industry is expected to add 2 to 3 percentage points to premiums next year.

But on top of that, the researchers found the mixed signals from the administration account for some of the higher charges. Those could increase before enrollment starts Nov. 1.

"The vast majority of companies in states with detailed rate filings have included some language around the uncertainty, so it is likely that more companies will revise their premiums to reflect uncertainty in the absence of clear answers from Congress or the administration," the report said. Once premiums are set, they're generally in place for a whole year.

Insurers who assumed that Trump will make good on his threat to stop billions in payments to subsidize copays and deductibles requested additional premium increases ranging from 2 percent to 23 percent, the report found.

Insurers who assumed the IRS under Trump will not enforce unpopular fines on people who remain uninsured requested additional premium increases ranging from 1.2 percent to 20 percent.

"In many cases that means insurers are adding double-digit premium increases on top of what they otherwise would have requested," said Cynthia Cox, a co-author of the Kaiser report. "In many cases, what we are seeing is an additional increase due to the political uncertainty."

That doesn't sound like what Trump promised when he assumed the presidency.

In a Washington Post interview ahead of his inauguration, Trump said, "We're going to have insurance for everybody."

"There was a philosophy in some circles that if you can't pay for it, you don't get it," he added. "That's not going to happen with us."

People covered under Obama's law "can expect to have great health care," Trump said at the time. "It will be in a much simplified form. Much less expensive and much better."

But the White House never produced the health care proposal Trump promised. And the GOP bills in Congress would have left millions more uninsured, a sobering side-effect that contributed to their political undoing.

The Trump administration sidestepped questions about its own role raised by the Kaiser study.

Spokeswoman Alleigh Marre said rising premiums and dwindling choices predate Trump.

"The Trump administration is committed to repealing and replacing Obamacare and will always be focused on putting patients, families, and doctors, not Washington, in charge of health care," Marre said in

a statement.

The ongoing political turmoil for people who buy individual health insurance stands in sharp contrast to relative calm and stability for the majority of Americans insured through workplace plans. The cost of employer-sponsored coverage is expected to rise around 5 or 6 percent next year, benefits consultants say.

Associated Press Health Writer Tom Murphy in Indianapolis contributed to this report.

Online:

Kaiser report - <https://tinyurl.com/ya2yneqj>

## Club pros enjoying the spotlight at PGA Championship

By **JOEDY McCREARY, AP Sports Writer**

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP) — Alex Beach played a practice round with Luke Donald, walked off the ninth green and signed autographs.

The club pro from New Jersey is savoring every moment of his first PGA Championship.

And deservedly so. About a year ago at this time, he was in a hospital.

"It took a long time to fight back," Beach said Wednesday, "but to be here a year and some change later, it feels very special."

So while Jordan Spieth, Phil Mickelson and the rest of golf's glamour names likely will dominate the headlines later in the week, the eve of the season's final major championship belonged to Beach and the 19 other club professionals who scratched their way into the field at Quail Hollow.

"It's kind of the underdog story. I think everyone likes that," Beach said. "The PGA is such a great brand, and they do a lot for the game, and a lot of these guys wouldn't be where they are without a PGA professional, and I'm no different.

"We all had mentors growing up, and people helping us get here," he added. "So it's kind of a nice thank-you to them. Obviously, it's great being in my position where I get to actually play, but it's something to look forward to every year. It's something to keep us working harder at our own game and trying to achieve to get back to this level."

Brian Gaffney in 2015 at Whistling Straits is the only club pro to make the cut in the last five years, and no club pro has finished among the top 20 since Jay Overton tied for 17th in 1988 at Oak Tree.

But they have been an integral part of the PGA Championship since its start in 1916, and perhaps even more so since the tour players broke away in 1969 to form what is now the PGA Tour. They have as much chance of winning as the aging past champions at the Masters or British Open. But the PGA of America can't imagine having its major championship without them for the message it sends.

A club pro's path to the PGA Championship leads through section championships and the PGA Professional National Championship, where the top 20 finishers earn invitations. Omar Uresti won it in June at Oregon's Sunriver Resort, beating Dave McNabb in the second hole of a playoff.

"Those 20 professionals make a great statement for the game of golf in the industry," PGA President Paul Levy said. "As you look at all these great players, they all started out working with a PGA club professional. So it's a platform for our association and the best 20 players in our association to show the world that they play the game at a high level. We think it's a great way to champion what the PGA of America golf professional does and the relationship with the tour."

Beach, a 27-year-old native of Stillwater, Minnesota, who graduated from Nebraska but did not play college golf, is an assistant club pro at Baltusrol, which hosted last year's PGA Championship.

"For me, having not played college golf, I kind of created my own journey to get here," Beach said. "And I think I want to use that to (inspire) other people who maybe didn't follow the typical route — anyone can get here, and it's no different than anything else at life. Put your head down and work hard, and you can achieve it, and this is where I want to be."

Beach qualified to play on his home course but pulled out at the last minute when a blood clot was found

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in his leg. In each of the previous three years, he failed to qualify by one stroke.

"The anticipation of looking forward to that after missing it for three years, making it, and then the day of, ending up in the hospital, kind of seemed a little unfair," he said. "But it was a little adversity and I think I made the best of it."

Beach won the New Jersey PGA Professional Championship, then finished ninth at Sunriver to earn a spot in Charlotte.

"Everyone has been so welcoming to us that we feel like we are a part of this week, even though we're (taking) a little different route," he said. "It's fun. The whole experience has been incredible. And I'm looking forward to the next step."

More AP golf: [apnews.com/tag/apf-Golf](http://apnews.com/tag/apf-Golf)

## Trump administration urged to avoid salmon protection rules

By KEITH RIDLER, Associated Press

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — A group that represents farmers is calling the costs of saving imperiled salmon in the largest river system in the Pacific Northwest unsustainable and is turning to the Trump administration to sidestep endangered species laws.

The Columbia-Snake River Irrigators Association wants the government to convene a Cabinet-level committee with the power to allow exemptions to the Endangered Species Act. Known as the "God squad" because its decisions can lead to extinctions of threatened wildlife, it has only gathered three times — the last 25 years ago during a controversy over spotted owl habitat in the Northwest.

The irrigators association is frustrated with court rulings it says favor fish over people, claiming the committee could end years of legal challenges over U.S. dams on the Columbia and Snake rivers and bring stability for irrigators, power generators and other businesses that rely on the water.

Environmental groups call the request a publicity stunt and say it could hurt fishing companies and others that rely on healthy runs of federally protected salmon and steelhead.

The association sees hope in a series of pro-industry environmental decisions by President Donald Trump. His administration has rescinded an Obama-era rule that would shield many small streams and other bodies of water from pollution and development, enacted policies to increase coal mining on federal lands and proposed giving Western states greater flexibility to allow development in habitat of sage grouse, a threatened bird.

Darryll Olsen, association board representative, said the irrigators requested the committee during former President Barack Obama's tenure but got nowhere. He said the Trump administration has been encouraging during talks, leading to a formal request last month for a meeting with Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke.

"What we're asking for is that the secretary give direction to the (Interior) Department to work with us to review the steps for implementing the God squad," Olsen said.

Zinke can gather the committee, which he would chair and would include other natural resource agencies, such as the Environmental Protection Agency. It also would include representatives from Washington state, Oregon, Idaho and Montana.

If five of the federal committee members agree, they could exempt U.S. agencies from Endangered Species Act requirements for one or more of the thirteen species of salmon and steelhead listed since the early 1990s.

The irrigators group, which has 120 members growing food crops in Washington state and Oregon, expects to meet with Zinke soon, Olsen said.

Interior spokeswoman Heather Swift said in an email that the agency could not comment on a committee that had not been formed and that she had no information about Zinke's meetings.

Joseph Bogaard, executive director of a coalition of conservation, commercial, sport fishing and business groups called Save Our Wild Salmon, blasted the irrigation association's request.

"It's a terrible idea that will deliver great harm to the people and businesses of the Pacific Northwest,"

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said Bogaard, whose coalition relies on the fish to produce millions of dollars of revenue.

A federal judge ruled last year that the government had not done enough to improve salmon runs despite spending billions of dollars and urged it to consider removing four dams on the lower Snake River.

Todd True, a lawyer with the environmental law firm Earthjustice who represented some plaintiffs in that 2016 ruling, said the God squad request should go nowhere.

"There isn't any basis to convene the committee because there are reasonable alternatives to save the fish," he said, pointing to the dam removal option. "Their removal would be a big step forward."

This year, fish counts at dams on the Columbia and Snake rivers have been well below the 10-year average, which biologists blame on droughts in 2014 and 2015 and warming ocean conditions.

Various results have emerged the three times the God squad has convened. It refused to grant an exemption for a Tennessee dam in the 1970s over a fish called the snail darter. Regarding crane protection in the Midwest, a settlement was reached before the panel offered a decision.

In 1992, it voted to sidestep protections for the northern spotted owl and allow the Interior Department to sell timber on land in Oregon.

## Why North Korea has no interest in talking to the South

By KIM TONG-HYUNG, Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — With liberals back in charge in South Korea, Seoul is making peace offerings to its archrivals, but the North isn't biting.

South Korean President Moon Jae-in believes the best way to solve the North Korean nuclear crisis is engagement of the sort that two past liberal leaders used to win historic summits with Pyongyang.

The problem, as clearly demonstrated during the last several chaotic days, is that North Korea doesn't want to talk.

Instead, it has been testing missiles at an unprecedented pace and threatening to launch some of those toward Guam. Pyongyang may be looking to eventually use the existence of its nuclear weapons to negotiate a peace treaty with the United States to officially end the 1950-53 Korean War and remove U.S. troops from the South. Until, and unless, that happens, Seoul probably will have little luck building bridges.

This puts Moon in a bind, forcing him right when his inclination is to go left.

### 'SUNSHINE' REDUX

The Koreas last held formal talks in December 2015. Since then, North Korea has conducted a torrent of missile tests and two nuclear tests, boosting its efforts to make nuclear weapons small enough to fit on long-range missiles.

Moon, who took office in May, made his most ambitious plea for engagement two days after North Korea test-launched its first intercontinental ballistic missile last month.

In a July 6 speech in Berlin, Moon vowed to build on the legacies of late liberal leaders Kim Dae-jung and Roh Moo-hyun and their so-called "Sunshine Policy." Seoul's economic inducements resulted in two historic summit meetings and temporary rapprochement between the Koreas in the 2000s.

Moon said the Koreas should start off with "easy" subjects. He proposed talks for reducing animosities across their heavily armed border and a resumption of meetings between aging relatives separated by war. He invited the North to participate in next year's Winter Olympics, which South Korea is hosting. And he proposed ambitious longer-term projects, such as reconnecting an inter-Korean railway and building a gas pipeline connecting the Koreas with Russia.

Moon said he wasn't offering unconditional cooperation. He condemned the ICBM launch and said the North could guarantee its security only through "complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization." He said he was willing to meet with North Korean ruler Kim Jong Un, but only under the right conditions.

The North Korean response was blunt. It ridiculed his comments, ignored his proposals and conducted its second ICBM test on July 28.

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## EYES ON WASHINGTON

Reopening dialogue with Pyongyang is crucial for Moon, who says the South should take the lead when it comes to solving the North Korean nuclear problem. But analysts say the ICBM tests show that Pyongyang is focused on Washington and uninterested in what Seoul brings to the table.

Pyongyang needs more tests before it can produce a fully functional ICBM. It seeks a real nuclear deterrent to undermine the alliance between Washington and Seoul and eventually force the United States into negotiations for a peace treaty to formally end the Korean War, which was stopped by an armistice.

North Korea wants an end to annual military drills between the United States and South Korea that it condemns as invasion rehearsals, and the removal of tens of thousands of U.S. troops stationed in the South. It will also be looking to breathe new life into an economy hammered by years of heavy international sanctions, and to find more markets for its cheap products and labor.

These clearly are of greater significance to Pyongyang than anything Seoul can provide.

## 'ONE-SIDED LOVE AFFAIR?'

Moon has harshly criticized the hard-line policies under a decade of conservative rule in Seoul, which he says did nothing to stop Pyongyang's weapons advancements and only diminished Seoul's voice in dealing with its rival. But North Korean intransigence may leave Moon in the same policy rut as his predecessor, Park Geun-hye, who also initially vowed more flexibility.

Following the North's second ICBM test, Moon took a hard line, ordering his military to schedule talks with Washington on allowing heavier warheads for South Korean missiles and to work with U.S. military commanders on adding launchers to a U.S. missile-defense system based in South Korea.

South Korea's conservatives want still more sanctions and pressure; they call his pleas for talks a "one-sided love affair."

Hong Min, an analyst at Seoul's Korea Institute for National Unification, said there's still a chance that Pyongyang could eventually accept Seoul's proposals for talks if recently strengthened U.N. sanctions are applied effectively in coming months.

But, he said, "it's critical that Seoul move with the international society to search for solutions, instead of approaching it as a matter of who gets to lead."

## Hurricane Franklin makes landfall on coast of Mexico

MIAMI (AP) — Hurricane Franklin has made landfall on the coast of Mexico.

The National Hurricane Center says the storm reached the coastline about 80 miles (128.74 kilometers) southeast of Tuxpan, Mexico, early Thursday with maximum sustained winds of 85 mph (136.79 kph).

Franklin strengthened into the first hurricane of the Atlantic season on Wednesday.

Authorities in Veracruz ordered classes cancelled at public schools Thursday as a precautionary measure.

As a tropical storm, Franklin made a relatively mild run across the Yucatan Peninsula earlier in the week. Mexico Civil Defense director Ricardo de la Cruz said Tuesday that the storm's impact on Yucatan was not as bad as initially feared, with some trees down and power out in some areas.

## Guam's residents feel US patriotism but growing concern

By GRACE GARCÉS BORDALLO and AUDREY McAVOY, The Associated Press

HAGATNA, Guam (AP) — The tiny U.S. territory of Guam feels a strong sense of patriotism and confidence in the American military, which has an enormous presence on the Pacific island. But residents are increasingly worried over Washington's escalating war of words with North Korea.

The people of Guam woke up Thursday to another pointed threat from Pyongyang, which vowed to complete a plan to attack waters near the island by mid-August — adding a timeline to a threat from a day earlier that North Korea would create an "enveloping fire" around Guam.

Like other U.S. territories, Guam has a sometimes complicated relationship with the U.S. mainland but



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many across the island say despite the threats and concerns they feel reassured and protected by the military — especially in times of tense, geopolitical sparring.

The American military presence on Guam consists of two bases — Andersen Air Force Base in the north and Naval Base Guam in the south — which are home to 7,000 U.S. troops.

“I feel that the presence of the military on Guam will help us a lot,” said Virgie Matson, 51, a resident of Dededo, Guam’s most populated village. “They are here to protect the islands, just in case something happens.”

The possibility of a nuclear confrontation is considered remote but international alarm has been escalating in recent days. In the latest development, Gen. Kim Rak Gyom, who heads North Korea’s rocket command, said in a statement carried by state media that his country was “about to take” military action near Guam. He said the North would finalize a plan by mid-August to fire four mid-range missiles hitting waters 30 to 40 kilometers (19 to 25 miles) away from the island.

It’s not the first time North Korea has threatened Guam, which is a crucial, strategic hub for U.S. forces in the Pacific.

Andersen Air Force Base houses a Navy helicopter squadron and Air Force bombers that rotate to Guam from the U.S. mainland, including the B-2 stealth bomber, B-1 and B-52. Their location in a U.S. territory means its military is just hours from potential flashpoints in the western Pacific.

Naval Base Guam is an important outpost for U.S. fast-attack nuclear powered submarines that are a key means for gathering intelligence in the region, including off the Korean peninsula and in the South China Sea where China has been building military bases on man-made islands that have stirred tension across Asia.

The U.S. military has said it plans to increase its presence on Guam and will move thousands of U.S. Marines currently stationed in Japan to the island between 2024 and 2028.

“I’m pro military buildup,” said resident Gus Aflague, 60, whose grandfather and brother both joined the U.S. Navy.

“North Korea has always threatened other countries. They threatened U.S., other countries, and they threaten Guam. It’s a propaganda, that’s how I feel,” he said but added that the military offered an extra reassurance. “I feel safe with our military presence here — Andersen and the Navy.”

There’s a sense of patriotism among those who cite the island’s history of Guam residents serving in the U.S. military. The U.S. took control of Guam in 1898, when Spanish authorities surrendered to the U.S. Navy.

During the Vietnam War, the Air Force sent 155 B-52 bombers to Guam to hit targets in Southeast Asia. Guam was also a refueling and transfer spot for people heading to Southeast Asia, and many refugees fleeing Saigon were evacuated through Guam.

But there’s also some resentment about not being able to vote in the general election for U.S. president. Guamanians have served in all major U.S. wars since World War II and see military service as a source of pride. A huge red, white and blue ribbon is outside the airport terminal.

Resident Isaac Camacho, 19, says he feels Guam’s relationship with the U.S. mainland is “a little misunderstood on their part.”

“They believe that we are not true U.S. citizens, when we do have plenty of Chamorro people going into the U.S. military and serving for their country and dying for their country,” he said. Chamorros are the indigenous people of Guam. “And not a lot of Americans know that.”

Guam is about 2,100 miles (3,380 kilometers) southeast of Pyongyang and 3,800 miles (6,115 kilometers) west of Honolulu in the Pacific Ocean. For years, North Korea has claimed Guam is within its missiles’ striking distance, making furious statements each time when the U.S. flew powerful bombers from the island’s air base to the Korean Peninsula.

In August last year, the North’s Foreign Ministry warned that all U.S. military bases in the Pacific including Guam would “face ruin in the face of all-out and substantial attack” by the North’s military. In 2013, state media cited leader Kim Jong Un as having ordered his military to prepare plans on launching strikes on U.S. military bases in Guam, Hawaii and South Korea as well as the American mainland.

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Guam is armed with the U.S. Army's defense system known as Terminal High Altitude Area Defense, or THAAD, which can intercept missiles.

McAvoy reported from Honolulu. Jennifer Sinco Kelleher in Honolulu and Jocelyn Gecker in San Francisco contributed reporting.

## Ricky Martin defends Versace murder drama as respectful

LYNN ELBER, AP Television Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Ricky Martin said he reassured Gianni Versace's longtime partner Antonio D'Amico that the pair will be treated respectfully in a TV drama about Versace's 1997 murder.

"I'll make sure people fall in love with your relationship with Gianni," Martin, who plays D'Amico in FX's "The Assassination of Gianni Versace: American Crime Story," recounted telling him.

Martin said he spoke by phone Wednesday to D'Amico after he had publicly criticized the series for what he called inaccuracies. It's in production and set to air in January.

Executive producer Ryan Murphy, taking part in a panel discussion Wednesday, said D'Amico may have been judging the project based on a paparazzi photo snapped during filming outside Versace's Miami Beach mansion. It's where the famed fashion designer was shot by serial killer Andrew Cunanan.

But Murphy said the series is a drama and not a documentary, adding, "you have to be respectful but make it your own." It's part of his "American Crime Story" anthology that began with the Emmy-winning "The People v. O.J. Simpson."

The reference to "assassination" in the title is deliberate, Murphy said.

The word has a political overtone that indicates killing to make a point, "and that's exactly what Andrew Cunanan did," he said of the man believed to have killed at least four others before Versace. Cunanan committed suicide about a week later as police tracked him.

Cunanan was targeting gay men and Versace was among the rare celebrities who dared to be open about their sexuality at a repressive time, Murphy said. That motivation and law enforcement's failure to stop the murders, which Murphy blamed on homophobia, were chief reasons he decided to make the series.

"Versace was the last victim and he didn't have to die," he said.

Venezuelan actor Edgar Ramirez ("The Girl on the Train") plays Versace, with Darren Criss ("Glee") as Cunanan and Penelope Cruz as Versace's sister, Donatella.

Murphy said the series honors the loss of all Cunanan's victims who were taken too soon. But Versace was a genius whose potential to disrupt society was lost, he said.

"We're in a world that Gianni Versace created," Ramirez said, one that combined sexiness, glamour and opulence in unparalleled ways.

## Mom says she didn't want incident to define Swift's life

By JAMES ANDERSON and TATIANA FLOWERS, Associated Press

DENVER (AP) — Taylor Swift's mother and confidante took the witness stand Wednesday, saying she and her daughter's managers had told the bosses of a disc jockey accused of groping the singer-songwriter that they hoped he would be fired but didn't ask them to do so.

Andrea Swift said during her emotional testimony at a civil trial in federal court in Denver that she had no doubt about what happened during a pre-concert photo op, based on a conversation with her daughter.

"She said, 'Mom, a guy just grabbed my ass.' ... She was really shaken. She was humiliated," a tearful Andrea Swift told jurors.

Andrea Swift is a co-defendant in the lawsuit filed by David Mueller.

Mueller's attorney, Gabriel McFarland, asked why Swift's team didn't contact police.

"I did not want this event to define her life," Andrea Swift said. "We absolutely wanted to keep it private, but we didn't want him to get away with it."

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Mueller has sued Taylor Swift and others, claiming he was falsely accused and then fired over her allegation. He is seeking at least \$3 million.

Swift has countersued, claiming she was sexually assaulted. She is seeking a symbolic \$1, saying she wants to serve as an example to other women who have been assaulted.

Andrea Swift testified that her daughter never urged any specific action against Mueller.

She also said the encounter changed their interactions with the public, explaining that Taylor Swift's meet-and-greets are now smaller and her interaction with fans at concerts is more limited.

"It absolutely shattered our trust," Andrea Swift said. "It scared us, scared us very badly."

The final testimony of the day came from Frank Bell, Swift's liaison with radio stations.

He said he asked Mueller's employer to investigate the encounter but didn't request that Mueller be fired. Instead, he said he sought "appropriate action."

Bell is a longtime friend of Swift's father, Scott Swift, who was in court watching the proceedings.

Earlier in the day, Mueller testified that the photo taken before the 2013 concert in Denver was "weird and awkward," but he insisted that he touched Swift in the ribs, not in the rear, as she alleges in her lawsuit.

Swift's attorney Douglas Baldrige repeatedly asked Mueller why his right hand was behind Swift in the picture.

Mueller said his hand was touching Swift's skirt after he put his arm around her and their arms got crossed.

"My hand was at rib-cage level and apparently it went down," Mueller said.

In the image, shown to jurors during opening statements but not publicly released, Mueller's hand is behind Swift, just below her waist. Both are smiling.

McFarland told jurors that the photo does not show Mueller's hand under Swift's skirt and that the skirt was not rumpled.

Baldrige, however, said several people noticed the pop star was upset after meeting with Mueller.

Her bodyguard Greg Dent has testified in a deposition that he had seen Mueller lift Swift's skirt, the lawyer told jurors.

In addition, Baldrige quoted a deposition by Swift's photographer Stephanie Simbeck, who said Swift uttered "that guy" had grabbed her behind.

Dent and Simbeck are listed as possible witnesses at the trial.

Baldrige told jurors in his opening statement that Swift is "absolutely certain" she was sexually assaulted by Mueller, and the photo is "damning" proof of it.

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Associated Press writer P. Solomon Banda contributed to this report.

## What next for North Korea, Guam and Trump? Experts weigh in

By MARTHA MENDOZA, Associated Press

SAN JOSE, California (AP) — Threatening language between the U.S. and North Korea is flaring this week. After President Donald Trump vowed to respond with "fire and fury" if Pyongyang continued to threaten the U.S., the North's military said it is finalizing a plan to fire four midrange missiles to hit waters near the strategic U.S. territory of Guam.

Below, North Korea experts reached Wednesday in the U.S. discuss the gravity of the moment and where both countries, and the world, could go from here:

### CLOSER TO THE BRINK, TALKS ESSENTIAL

Srinivasan Sitaraman, political scientist at Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts:

Despite Secretary of State Rex Tillerson's efforts to play down Trump's statements on unleashing "fire and fury" on the North, "it seems that Mr. Trump either deliberately or inadvertently threatened nuclear annihilation of North Korea. One of the consequences of this war of words and the associated escalation postures is that it would be very hard for both the United States and North Korea to back down after having quickly pushed each other close to the brink.

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"Despite this escalation it is my belief that the possibility of a nuclear exchange, although higher than normal, is still below the threshold of actual usage. ... It is absolutely essential to find ways to bring North Korea to the negotiating table and engage them in talks and remove the cloud of nuclear war that is hanging over the world. Getting the North Koreans to the negotiating table is not something that could be achieved in the short term, but the Six Parties (the U.S., North Korea, South Korea, Japan, China and Russia) and the U.N. Security Council must work towards laying the groundwork towards this objective."

## PLAYING INTO KIM'S HANDS?

Tony Talbott, interim executive director of the University of Dayton Human Rights Center in Ohio:

"Both leaders are primarily speaking to their domestic audiences. Trump wants or needs to appear strong to fit his image and previous rhetoric. Kim needs to maintain the illusion of him being the only possible savior of his country and people — an island of virtue adrift in a sea of brutal enemies. With China and Russia agreeing to the (U.N. Security Council) sanctions against DPRK (the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the North's official name), Kim truly looks and feels alone and will increase his strident rhetoric. Engaging in this theater with him, escalating the intensity and threat of our responses, will be detrimental and actually plays into Kim's hands, regarding maintaining control of the regime."

## 'NO GOOD MILITARY OPTIONS'

Raymond Kuo, political scientist at Fordham University in New York:

There are "no good military options that wouldn't result in deaths of thousands in the first day, and even then it might not eliminate DPRK capability."

He said the world "may ultimately have to rely on mutually assured destruction — that nukes self-deter and no one goes to nuclear war. But that will also create great instability on a conventional and unconventional warfare level. Ironically, it may be Trump that escalates and causes war."

## GUAM ATTACK UNLIKELY; TWEETS 'IRRESPONSIBLE'

Margaret E. Kosal, director of the Sam Nunn Security Program and Military Fellows Program at the Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta:

Could North Korea truly attack Guam? "It's likely no. No one outside of a small number of people in the DPRK can know for sure. Nonetheless, that capability is beyond anything that they have demonstrated thus far. Guam is a non-credible threat; Seoul and Japan is a credible threat.

She called Trump's comments on Twitter "irresponsible. It does nothing to help the U.S. or our allies. It increases instability. Our diplomats need to be empowered to do their jobs."

## A NEGOTIATING TACTIC?

Tyler White, an assistant professor of political science at University of Nebraska-Lincoln:

"Trump's statements seem to mirror Kim's language. Is he trying to talk to Kim in words he understands? Is this just the way Trump talks? Is Trump trying to be unpredictable and thus change China's calculation and raise the cost for supporting Kim? It is honestly hard to say. But the rest of the national security establishment in the U.S. seems to be walking Trump's rhetoric back a bit today.

"The hope is that Kim feels compelled to come back to the negotiating table. One possible way to do that would be to make him think that the U.S. is feeling less constrained to act. That of course carries big risks that he might pre-emptively strike. However, it seems clear to me that Kim's nuclear program is a tool for keeping his regime in power and engaging in a nuclear exchange with the U.S. will be an existential issue for him. So I doubt Kim will be inclined to strike first. If that is Trump's assessment as well he might simply be attempting to create uncertainty in Kim and hopefully get him to start negotiating."

## FBI agents searched former Trump campaign chair's home

By CHAD DAY and ERIC TUCKER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — FBI agents looking for financial documents have searched one of the homes of President Donald Trump's former campaign chairman, Paul Manafort, whose past foreign political work has been swept into the investigations into Russian interference in the 2016 election. A Manafort spokesman confirmed the search Wednesday.

Manafort spokesman Jason Maloni said in a statement that FBI agents had obtained a warrant and searched one of Manafort's homes, but he would not say when the search occurred or what it was for.

"Mr. Manafort has consistently cooperated with law enforcement and other serious inquiries and did so on this occasion as well," Maloni said.

The Associated Press has learned the warrant for the search on July 26 at Manafort's home in Alexandria, Virginia, sought information including tax documents and banking records. The Washington Post first reported the raid.

Manafort has been a subject of a longstanding FBI investigation into his dealings in Ukraine and work for the country's former president, Viktor Yanukovich. That investigation has been incorporated into the probe led by special counsel Robert Mueller, who is also scrutinizing Manafort's role in the Trump campaign as he looks into Russia's meddling in the 2016 election and any possible collusion with Trump associates.

Manafort, who led the Trump campaign for several months, has denied any wrongdoing. He also spoke behind closed doors to Senate investigators for an interview just one day before the search of his home.

The use of a search warrant indicates that law enforcement officials have convinced a judge there is probable cause to believe a crime may have been committed. A house raid can be seen as an aggressive tactic given that Manafort has been cooperating with congressional investigators and has turned over hundreds of pages of documents. It could indicate law enforcement was looking for records beyond what Manafort provided.

Word of the raid is the latest revelation about Mueller's investigation, which had been operating in relative secrecy compared with numerous congressional probes looking at the election. In recent days, it's become clear the former FBI director is using a grand jury in Washington as part of his investigation. A grand jury in the Eastern District of Virginia in recent months has also been used by investigators looking into former Trump national security adviser Michael Flynn.

Also, FBI agents have been asking witnesses since the spring about \$530,000 worth of lobbying and investigative work carried out by Flynn's firm, Flynn Intel Group, according to a person familiar with the investigation. That work sought the extradition of an exiled Turkish cleric living in the U.S. Through his attorney, Flynn has declined to comment on the investigation.

The person, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the sensitive details of the investigation, said FBI agents have also been asking about Flynn's business partner, Bijan Kian, who served on the Trump presidential transition. Kian has not responded to multiple attempts to contact him over several months.

In recent months, Flynn and Manafort have turned over documents to congressional committees investigating the election interference.

One focus of the multiple probes, including Mueller's, is a June 2016 meeting Manafort attended with Trump's son-in-law, Jared Kushner, and Donald Trump Jr. That meeting, held at Trump Tower in New York, was described to Trump Jr. in emails as part of a Russian government effort to help the Trump campaign by passing along information that could be used against Democrat Hillary Clinton.

During his Senate intelligence committee interview, Manafort provided his recollection of the Trump Tower meeting and turned over contemporaneous notes he took during the gathering. The interview was confined to that meeting.

Manafort has also turned over other documents to the Senate intelligence committee as well as about 400 pages of records to the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Meanwhile, the Judiciary Committee said Wednesday it has also received about 250 pages of documents from Trump Jr. and about 20,000 pages from the Trump campaign.

The content of the documents was not immediately clear. The committee said it received the Manafort and Trump campaign documents on Aug. 2 and the records from Trump Jr. on Aug. 4.

Judiciary committee leaders have also been in talks with Trump Jr. and Manafort about private interviews. The committee initially called for them to testify publicly, but lawmakers have since said they were negotiating the terms of their appearances.

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

## US oil industry pushes back on sanctions against Venezuela

By JOSHUA GOODMAN and ALEXANDRA OLSON, Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) — The Trump administration's decision on Wednesday to slap sanctions on eight members of Venezuela's all-powerful constitutional assembly brings to 30 the number of government loyalists targeted for human rights abuses and violations of democratic norms since anti-government protests began in April.

But even as the list of targeted individuals grows longer, promised economic sanctions have yet to materialize amid an outcry by the U.S. oil industry that a potential ban on petroleum imports from Venezuela — the third-largest supplier to the U.S. — would hurt U.S. jobs and drive up gas costs.

The sanctions announced Wednesday focused on current or former Venezuelan government officials accused by the U.S. of supporting President Nicolas Maduro's creation of a special assembly charged with rewriting Venezuela's constitution — a move the U.S. says is an attempt by Maduro to shore up his grip on power.

Since its election last month, the 545-member assembly has declared itself superior to all other government institutions and ousted Venezuela's chief prosecutor, a vocal critic of Maduro.

The U.S. Treasury Department took the unusual step of sanctioning Maduro himself last month, freezing any assets he may have in the U.S. and blocking Americans from doing business with him.

The newest additions on Wednesday include Adan Chavez, the older brother of Hugo Chavez, who is credited with introducing the late president to Marxist ideology in the 1970s, and a national guard colonel lionized by the government after he physically shoved congress President Julio Borges during a heated exchange caught on video.

Former Foreign Minister Delcy Rodriguez, who is leading the assembly but has so far escaped being sanctioned, said the latest U.S. action seeks to "spread fear" among delegates and please government opponents she described as "criminals" and "unpatriotic."

While most Venezuelan officials wear U.S. sanctions as a badge of honor — and are frequently rewarded with promotions as a result — Maduro faces a far greater threat if Trump follows through on economic sanctions against the OPEC nation.

For all of Maduro's anti-capitalist rhetoric, Venezuela, which sits atop the world's largest oil reserves, remains highly dependent on oil exports to the U.S., especially for importing food and medicine — items in short supply as crude prices have fallen and triple-digit inflation wreaks havoc on the economy.

The Trump administration warned last month that it would take "strong and swift economic actions" against Maduro if he went ahead with plans to seat the constitutional assembly.

But since the election last month, no such action has materialized, leading some of Maduro's opponents to wonder whether the U.S. president has lost his nerve.

The prospect of an import ban has alarmed U.S. oil companies that rely on Venezuelan crude.

Nine companies, including Chevron, Valero, Citgo and Phillips 66, currently process Venezuelan crude in more than 20 U.S. refineries, most of them located along the Gulf Coast, according to data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration. Many of these refineries are designed for the type of heavy crude that Venezuela exports and replacing those supplies would be disruptive and costly.

An influential industry group whose members include the nine companies has written two letters to Trump

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warning there is no guarantee that other key sources of U.S. heavy crude imports — Canada, Mexico and Colombia — could provide enough additional supply to replace the Venezuelan oil. Many refineries would likely turn to Saudi Arabia but the higher costs associated with such a shift “could significantly impact fuel costs for U.S. consumers,” according to the letter by the American Fuel & Petrochemicals Manufacturers.

“We want to make sure that we don’t have the unintended consequence of doing more harm to U.S. refineries than the Maduro regime,” said Chet Thompson, the CEO of the group, which represents 95 percent of the U.S. refining sector.

He added that he is hopeful his lobbying is gaining traction.

“We think we’ve come a long way from early July when these sanctions were first being kicked around. ... We think folks are a lot smarter on this issue than they used to be,” he said. “We certainly have not received any commitments or promises as far as what they are going to do. But we have done our job.”

The oil industry is finding allies in the U.S. Congress, particularly among lawmakers from the Gulf states.

Six Republican congressmen from three of the states that process Venezuela’s heavy crude — Texas, Mississippi and Louisiana — recently wrote a letter to Trump warning that banning Venezuelan oil imports would do more harm than good. While applauding the president for his efforts to counter “the disturbing decline of democracy” in Venezuela, the lawmakers, led by Rep. Randy Weber of Texas, said that it could jeopardize 525,000 refining-related jobs along the Gulf Coast.

“We fear that potential sanctions will harm the U.S. economy, impair the global competitiveness of our energy business and raise costs to consumers,” according to the July 28 letter, a copy of which was provided to The Associated Press by a senior Venezuelan official and whose authenticity was confirmed by one of the signatories, Rep. Clay Higgins of Louisiana.

Some Senate Republicans could soon join the chorus. Sen. Bill Cassidy, a Louisiana Republican who sits on the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, is preparing a letter to Trump raising similar concerns about the impact on the U.S. fuel market, according to his spokesman, John Cummings, who said the senator is rounding up signatories.

Energy analysts, however, have been more circumspect about the effect on global markets and prices at the pump. A recent analysis by Wells Fargo Securities concluded that one impact would be to raise foreign heavy crude prices by about \$3.50 a barrel. However, the ban would not affect demand for gasoline or reduce the overall supply of crude on the global market, as Venezuela would likely redirect its shipments to countries in Asia and elsewhere, albeit at a painful discount.

“We do not believe there would be significant impact on retail prices to U.S. consumers given that the net availability of worldwide crude oil volumes would be unchanged,” the Wells Fargo report said.

Venezuela’s government, meanwhile, continued to crack down on its opponents.

The government-packed Supreme Court ordered the removal and imprisonment of another Caracas-area mayor for not obeying orders to shut down protests in his district.

David Smolansky is the fifth opposition mayor to be removed or jailed in little more than two weeks as Maduro attempts to consolidate his power by going after his enemies. He was sentenced to 15 months in jail in a ruling Wednesday night.

The whereabouts of Smolansky, the mayor of El Hatillo district, were not immediately known.

Olson reported from New York.

## 10 Things to Know for Thursday

By The Associated Press

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

### 1. PYONGYANG RATCHETS UP RHETORIC

North Korea answers Trump’s threats of “fire and fury,” with one of Kim Jong Un’s generals saying the country is “about to take” military action near Guam.

### 2. US EXPELS 2 CUBAN DIPLOMATS AFTER INCIDENT IN CUBA

U.S. officials believe that a covert sonic device left a group of American diplomats in Havana with severe

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hearing loss.

## 3. FEDS DESCEND ON PAUL MANAFORT

FBI agents looking for financial documents recently searched one of the homes of Trump's former campaign chairman, whose past foreign political work is under scrutiny.

## 4. WHICH CONTROVERSY BETSY DEVOS IS REVISITING

The education secretary tells the AP she should have decried racism "much more forcefully" when talking about historically black colleges and universities earlier this year.

## 5. 52 DRY DAYS IN A ROW - AND COUNTING

Seattle, known for its overcast skies, is experiencing its longest dry streak in more than six decades.

## 6. WHAT'S LATEST ADVANCE IN CANCER FIGHT

Scientists have the first major evidence that blood tests called liquid biopsies hold promise for screening people for cancer.

## 7. US LINKS RAFA MARQUEZ TO DRUG RING

The legendary Mexican soccer player is among 22 people sanctioned for alleged ties to a drug trafficking organization.

## 8. WHY IT MAY BE TIME TO STOCK UP ON FOREVER STAMPS

Regulators appear likely to accept the financially beleaguered Postal Service's request for more freedom to raise the price of mailing letters.

## 9. TV HOST FILES \$50 MILLION DEFAMATION SUIT

Suspended Fox News host Eric Bolling sues the reporter who broke the story that he allegedly sent lewd text messages to colleagues.

## 10. JORDAN SPIETH CHASING HISTORY

The golfer, newly 24, is seeking a career Grand Slam at the PGA Championship. No one so young has ever accomplished it.

## Hearing loss of US diplomats in Cuba blamed on covert device

By **MATTHEW LEE** and **MICHAEL WEISSENSTEIN**, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The two-year-old U.S. diplomatic relationship with Cuba was roiled Wednesday by what U.S. officials say was a string of bizarre incidents that left a group of American diplomats in Havana with severe hearing loss attributed to a covert sonic device.

In the fall of 2016, a series of U.S. diplomats began suffering unexplained losses of hearing, according to officials with knowledge of the investigation into the case. Several of the diplomats were recent arrivals at the embassy, which reopened in 2015 as part of former President Barack Obama's reestablishment of diplomatic relations with Cuba.

Some of the diplomats' symptoms were so severe that they were forced to cancel their tours early and return to the United States, officials said. After months of investigation, U.S. officials concluded that the diplomats had been exposed to an advanced device that operated outside the range of audible sound and had been deployed either inside or outside their residences. It was not immediately clear if the device was a weapon used in a deliberate attack, or had some other purpose.

The U.S. officials weren't authorized to discuss the investigation publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

State Department spokeswoman Heather Nauert said the U.S. retaliated by expelling two Cuban diplomats from their embassy in Washington on May 23. She did not say how many U.S. diplomats were affected or confirm they had suffered hearing loss, saying only that they had "a variety of physical symptoms."

The Cuban government said in a lengthy statement late Wednesday that "Cuba has never permitted, nor will permit, that Cuban territory be used for any action against accredited diplomatic officials or their families, with no exception."

The statement from the Cuban Foreign Ministry said it had been informed of the incidents on Feb. 17 and had launched an "exhaustive, high-priority, urgent investigation at the behest of the highest level of



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the Cuban government.”

It said the decision to expel two Cuban diplomats was “unjustified and baseless.”

The ministry said it had created an expert committee to analyze the incidents and had reinforced security around the U.S. embassy and U.S. diplomatic residences.

“Cuba is universally considered a safe destination for visitors and foreign diplomats, including U.S. citizens,” the statement said.

U.S. officials told The Associated Press that about five diplomats, several with spouses, had been affected and that no children had been involved. The FBI and Diplomatic Security Service are investigating.

Cuba employs a state security apparatus that keeps many people under surveillance and U.S. diplomats are among the most closely monitored people on the island. Like virtually all foreign diplomats in Cuba, the victims of the incidents lived in housing owned and maintained by the Cuban government.

However, officials familiar with the probe said investigators were looking into the possibilities that the incidents were carried out by a third country such as Russia, possibly operating without the knowledge of Cuba’s formal chain of command.

Nauert said investigators did not yet have a definitive explanation for the incidents but stressed they take them “very seriously,” as shown by the Cuban diplomats’ expulsions.

“We requested their departure as a reciprocal measure since some U.S. personnel’s assignments in Havana had to be curtailed due to these incidents,” she said. “Under the Vienna Convention, Cuba has an obligation to take measures to protect diplomats.”

U.S. diplomats in Cuba said they suffered occasional harassment for years after the restoration of limited ties with the communist government in the 1970s, harassment reciprocated by U.S. agents against Cuban diplomats in Washington. The use of sonic devices to intentionally harm diplomats would be unprecedented.

Weissenstein reported from Havana.

## AP Interview: DeVos says she didn’t decry racism enough

By MARIA DANILOVA and CAROLE FELDMAN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Education Secretary Betsy DeVos on Wednesday distanced herself from her comment earlier this year about the nation’s historically black colleges and universities being pioneers of school choice, saying that in the past “there were no choices” for African-Americans in higher education.

“When I talked about it being a pioneer in choice it was because I acknowledge that racism was rampant and there were no choices,” DeVos said in an interview with The Associated Press in her office at the Education Department. “These HBCUs provided choices for black students that they didn’t have.”

DeVos, who marks six months in office this week, alienated many African-Americans in February when she described historically black colleges as “real pioneers when it comes to school choice.” In May, she was booed while attending the commencement ceremony at a historically black college in Florida.

“My intention was to say they were pioneering on behalf of students that didn’t have another choice. This was their only choice,” DeVos said. “At the same time I should have decried much more forcefully the ravages of racism in this country.”

The Trump administration and DeVos have come under criticism from civil rights advocates for undoing some civil rights protections, including rescinding Obama-era federal guidance that instructed schools to allow transgender students to use the bathrooms of their choice and President Donald Trump calling for banning transgender individuals from serving in the military.

DeVos, a billionaire Republican donor and long-standing school choice activist from Michigan, said that she has spent her career campaigning on behalf of minority children.

“That’s where my heart has been for three decades is to really empower and allow all families the same kind of opportunities I’ve had for my kids,” she said.

At the same time, DeVos acknowledged that she could have done more to reach out to African-American communities around the country to make her position more clear.

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"I've had these conversations with some of the African-American organizations that represent higher education, but probably not as explicitly as I am right now," DeVos said.

The NAACP and the National Association For Equal Opportunity in Higher Education did not return requests for comment about DeVos' remarks.

"It was a mistake and it sounds like she's acknowledged it," said Johnny Taylor, president of Thurgood Marshall College Fund, an organization representing HBCUs. "The reality is that people who decided that one statement, an error, is a statement about her commitment and knowledge about HBCUs — it's not realistic, it's not fair."

Marybeth Gasman, a professor of education at the University of Pennsylvania who studies minority-serving institutions, wasn't convinced.

"At the time she made the comments about school choice, I am certain she was trying to promote her school choice agenda," Gasman said in an e-mail. "I am glad she realizes the comments were offensive. That's important."

The issue of minorities' access to higher education remains controversial today. The Justice Department said last week it would conduct an inquiry into how race influences admissions at Harvard University after a coalition of more than 60 Asian-American groups brought a complaint alleging the school uses race as a factor in admissions and discriminates against Asian-Americans by holding them to a higher standard.

DeVos said her department was not involved in that process and added that this "has been a question for the courts and the courts have opined."

The Supreme Court last year upheld a University of Texas program that considers race, among other factors, in admissions, offering a narrow victory for affirmative action. A white Texan who was denied admission to the university sued, but the high court said the Texas plan complied with earlier court rulings that allow colleges to consider race in an effort to bolster diversity.

At America's elite private colleges, many of which have drawn criticism over race-conscious admission policies, incoming classes have become increasingly diverse in recent years.

Asked whether race should play a role in college admissions, DeVos said it is already being considered in the selection process.

"Well, they are looking at that, that is a factor today," DeVos said referring to college admissions officers. "I am not going to debate that, I am not going to discuss that."

But DeVos said the key to giving students equal access to higher education lies in elementary and secondary school.

"It is not fair to think that when students transit through a K-12 system that is not preparing them for beyond, that somehow we are going to wave a magic wand and things are going to be perfect for them at the higher-ed level," DeVos said.

"So I've always said: What we should really be talking about is what are we doing to ensure that every single child no matter their family income, no matter their racial background, no matter their zip code has equal opportunities to access a quality education."

Follow Maria Danilova on Twitter at [http://twitter.com/@m\\_education\\_ap](http://twitter.com/@m_education_ap) and Carole Feldman at <http://www.twitter.com/CaroleFeldman>

## Man ambushes French soldiers in car attack, later arrested

By ANGELA CHARLTON and RAPHAEL SATTER, Associated Press

LEVALLOIS-PERRET, France (AP) — A man rammed his car into a group of soldiers near Paris, injuring six of them, and then was cornered by police in a highway manhunt - the latest in what's become a disturbingly familiar pattern of attacks targeting French security forces.

It's unclear what motivated the driver, who was hospitalized with bullet wounds after the calculated morning ambush and an hours-long police chase. Authorities said he deliberately accelerated his BMW

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into a cluster of soldiers in what prosecutors are investigating as a potential terrorist attack.

President Emmanuel Macron went to Twitter to express his "congratulations to the forces of order that apprehended the perpetrator of the attack," and also to urge continued vigilance across the country.

Macron's government painted the incident in the suburb of Levallois-Perret as proof of the need to approve a new security law that critics contend infringes on liberties and would put France in a permanent state of emergency.

Wednesday's attack caused no deaths and hurt no civilians, but still set nerves on edge: It was the seventh attempted attack on security forces guarding France this year alone. While others have targeted prominent sites like the Eiffel Tower, Wednesday's attack hit the leafy, relatively affluent suburb of Levallois-Perret that is home to France's main intelligence service, the DGSI, and its counterterrorism service.

"We know it was a deliberate act," Interior Minister Gerard Collomb said. Defense Minister Florence Parly called it a reminder that extra security measures imposed in recent years are "more necessary than ever."

On a quiet summer morning, the suspect was seen waiting in a black BMW in a cul-de-sac near the Levallois city hall and a building used as a staging point for soldiers in France's operation to protect prominent sites, according to two police officials, who like others connected to the case weren't authorized to be publicly named because of the ongoing police operation.

A group of soldiers emerged from the building to board vehicles for a new shift when the car sped up and rammed into them, its force hurling the soldiers against their van, one of the officials said. Collomb said the car first approached slowly then sped up about five meters (yards) from its target.

A nearby resident described hearing an ear-piercing scream of pain, then soldiers chasing after the fleeing car.

Authorities checked video surveillance of the area and police fanned out and stopped numerous cars as they searched for the attacker.

Then, on the A16 highway near the English Channel port of Calais, police stopped what Prime Minister Edouard Philippe called the "principal suspect." Images of the arrest scene showed emergency vehicles surrounding a black BMW with a damaged windshield, on a cordoned-off highway in the midst of verdant fields.

Police officers opened fire during the arrest to subdue the man, and the suspect was injured along with an officer hit by a stray police bullet, a judicial official said.

The suspect was hospitalized, the official said, but his condition wasn't immediately clear.

One police official said the suspect may be an illegal North African immigrant in his 30s, while another said he was an Algerian with French residency papers. The government and prosecutors would not release information about his identity.

Heavily armed, masked police searched a building believed linked to the attacker in the Paris suburb of Bezons on Wednesday night.

The defense minister said she received "reassuring" news about the condition of the injured soldiers, and that their lives aren't in danger.

The soldiers were from the 35th infantry regiment and served in Operation Sentinelle, created to guard prominent French sites after a string of deadly Islamic extremist attacks in 2015.

A witness to the car attack, Nadia LeProhon, was startled by a loud crash outside her building and rushed outside her seventh-floor window to see two soldiers on the ground. Other soldiers ran after a speeding car, shouting "After him! Follow that car!"

"I'll never forget that scream - a scream of pain and distress," she told The Associated Press.

Resident Jean-Claude Veillant said he saw two uniformed soldiers on the ground. "It was horrible," he said, adding that both soldiers appeared to be in bad shape and one of them was unconscious.

The street is normally protected by retractable posts that are removed when vehicles move in and out, so the driver must have known exactly when to strike, Veillant said. "They must've really planned this," he said.

Counterterrorism prosecutors opened an investigation on potential charges of attempted murder of security forces in connection with a terrorist enterprise, the Paris prosecutor's office said.

Philippe, the prime minister, said that despite a sustained "high threat" against France, the government is sticking to plans to lift a 21-month state of emergency.

Speaking to lawmakers, he insisted that a new bill enshrining permanent counterterrorism measures would be enough to replace the state of emergency, imposed after deadly Islamic extremist attacks in November 2015. The bill is currently under parliamentary debate, ahead of an expected end to the state of emergency on Nov. 1.

Macron discussed the attack at a security meeting Wednesday and at a weekly Cabinet meeting.

Charlton reported from Paris. Associated Press writers Thomas Adamson, Elaine Ganley and Sylvie Corbet in Paris contributed to this report.

## Alert driver's tip led to capture of police killing suspect

By MARGARET STAFFORD, Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — A man charged in the shooting death of a western Missouri police officer was arrested after an alert driver provided a tip that the fugitive was wandering within miles of where the killing took place, a law enforcement official said.

The driver reported seeing Ian McCarthy walking along a state highway near Bucksaw Marina, just east of Clinton, and he was arrested without incident late Tuesday, Sgt. Bill Lowe of the Missouri Highway Patrol said at a news conference later that night.

The arrest ended a two-day manhunt that began after 37-year-old Clinton police officer Gary Michael was shot to death during a traffic stop Sunday night in Clinton, about 75 miles (120 kilometers) southeast of Kansas City.

Michael and McCarthy had exchanged gunfire before the officer died and the driver fled. Lowe said McCarthy, 39, was suffering from a gunshot wound when a patrol trooper arrested him. Lowe said the wound "wasn't serious" and probably was from his confrontation with McCarthy.

Lowe declined to comment on whether McCarthy had offered in insight on a possible motive when he was questioned after his arrest.

McCarthy was taken to a Kansas City area hospital for treatment and then was taken into custody at the Henry County jail. He is scheduled to be arraigned on Friday on charges of first-degree murder and armed criminal action. Online court records as of Wednesday do not show whether McCarthy has an attorney.

"We're just extremely thankful to the citizens of Henry County and citizens of Clinton that continued to give us tips and information. Without that, we may still be looking for him," Lowe said.

McCarthy was not armed when he was arrested. As of late Wednesday afternoon, Lowe said, investigators had not found the weapon used in Michael's shooting.

Investigators on Wednesday still were trying to retrace McCarthy's whereabouts during his two days on the run and determine if he had any help eluding authorities, Lowe said.

As the investigation continues, attention turned to honoring Michael, who was the first officer killed in the line of duty in Clinton.

His body was returned Wednesday to Clinton from Kansas City, where it had been since Monday while an autopsy was performed. A long line of police cars from across the state accompanied the body on the nearly 70-mile route, with emergency lights flashing. Along the route, vehicles stopped as the procession passed and onlookers paused to watch.

Hundreds of residents waited with police officers to greet Michael's body when it arrived in Clinton. At the funeral home, his fellow officers saluted as his body was carried into the building before a prayer was said.

McCarthy is also wanted in New Hampshire, where a warrant was issued in 2013 when he failed to show up for sentencing on a disorderly conduct charge, according to court records in that state. He served about four years in prison there for first-degree assault and a parole violation. He also is wanted on a warrant out of Johnson County, Missouri, in 2015 for unlawful possession of a firearm.

Lowe said earlier Tuesday that it was possible those outstanding warrants prompted McCarthy to shoot

Michael to avoid arrest. He also could have been under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or not in his right mind for some reason, Lowe said.

Michael's brother, Chris Michael, said the family is relieved that the suspect has been caught alive so "justice could be served." Michael told KCTV5 that McCarthy's capture was a positive step for everyone mourning his brother.

"We're just happy that we're going to be able to put this one Band-Aid in a long process of healing on, and start to move forward," he said.

Michael, who had been on the force less than a year, was a military police officer overseas for about five years before returning to the Kansas City area. He decided in his 30s to become a police officer and served in Appleton City for a short time before joining the force in Clinton.

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Associated Press reporter Jim Suhr also contributed to this story.

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## Trump hits McConnell for Senate crash of Obama health repeal

By ALAN FRAM, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump scolded his own party's Senate leader on Wednesday for the crash of the Republican drive to repeal and rewrite the Obama health care law, using Twitter to demand of Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, "Why not done?"

Trump fired back at the Kentucky Republican for telling a home-state audience this week that the president had "not been in this line of work before, and I think had excessive expectations about how quickly things happen in the democratic process."

The exchange came less than two weeks after Senate rejection of the GOP effort to scuttle President Barack Obama's health care law, probably McConnell's most jolting defeat as leader and Trump's worst legislative loss. The House approved its version in May, but its Senate failure — thanks to defecting GOP senators — marked the collapse of the party's attempt to deliver on vows to erase Obama's statute it's showcased since the law's 2010 enactment.

"Senator Mitch McConnell said I had 'excessive expectations,' but I don't think so," Trump tweeted. "After 7 years of hearing Repeal & Replace, why not done?"

Trump had repeatedly used Twitter to pressure McConnell to find the votes to approve the health care bill, even saying hours after its failure that GOP senators "look like fools."

But his tweet Wednesday was an unusually personal reproach of the 33-year Senate veteran, who is deeply respected by GOP lawmakers.

Trump will need him to guide the next major Republican priority, a tax system overhaul, through the chamber. And he might be a useful White House ally as investigations progress into collusion between Russia and Trump's presidential campaign.

For his part, McConnell's statement was surprising because he is typically among the capital's most guarded politicians. When it comes to criticizing Trump, he's seldom gone further than saying he wishes he would stop tweeting, and often refused to chime in when Trump made widely condemned comments during last year's campaign.

McConnell told the Rotary Club of Florence, Kentucky, on Monday that people think Congress is underperforming partly because "artificial deadlines, unrelated to the reality of the complexity of legislating, may not have been fully understood."

He added that 52 is "a challenging number," a reference to the GOP's scant 52-48 Senate majority. "You saw that on full display a couple of weeks ago," when McConnell failed to muster a majority to push three different Republican health care plans through the chamber.

McConnell's Kentucky remarks also drew a tweet from Dan Scavino Jr., the White House social media

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director.

"More excuses," wrote Scavino, one of Trump's more outspoken loyalists. "@SenateMajLdr must have needed another 4 years - in addition to the 7 years - to repeal and replace Obamacare."

Also joining the fray was Fox News Host Sean Hannity, a close Trump ally.

"@SenateMajLdr No Senator, YOU are a WEAK, SPINELESS leader who does not keep his word and you need to Retire!" Hannity tweeted.

Hard-right conservatives have long assailed McConnell for being insufficiently ideological.

Before taking office and after becoming president, Trump spoke often of moving legislation erasing Obama's law rapidly through Congress. On Jan. 10 — 10 days before taking office — he told The New York Times that Congress could approve a repeal bill "probably sometime next week," and a separate replacement measure would be passed "very quickly or simultaneously, very shortly thereafter."

Top congressional Republicans also fed expectations for quick work, placing health care atop their 2017 agenda. In January, House leaders unveiled a schedule calling for action by late March, and McConnell said in March that he wanted Senate passage by the April recess.

Congress has begun its summer break without passing any major legislation. It has passed bills but-tressing veterans' health care and financing the Food and Drug Administration, and the Senate confirmed Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch.

McConnell told the Kentuckians that lawmakers should be judged when the current two-year Congress ends in January 2019.

Hours before Trump tweeted about McConnell, the president took his side when he tweeted his endorsement of Sen. Luther Strange, R-Ala., for next week's Senate GOP primary. McConnell has backed Strange in that multi-candidate race.

Yet one loyal Trump supporter donated \$300,000 this month to a political committee backing a primary opponent of Republican Sen. Jeff Flake of Arizona. Flake, expected to get establishment GOP backing, faces a competitive race next year and is one of the biggest thorns in the president's side.

Robert Mercer's check marked the "first major gift" this cycle to the committee backing Senate candidate Kelli Ward, said Doug McKee, chairman of Kelli PAC. Mercer has helped fund the vigorously pro-Trump Breitbart News.

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AP writer Julie Bykowicz contributed to this report.

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This story has been corrected to attribute a statement to the campaign website of Brooks, not Strange.

## **GOP senator suggests brain tumor affected McCain vote**

**By DONNA CASSATA, Associated Press**

WASHINGTON (AP) — Sen. Ron Johnson suggested that fellow Republican Sen. John McCain's brain tumor and the after-midnight timing of the vote were factors in the Arizona lawmaker's decisive vote against the GOP health care bill.

In a radio interview Tuesday with AM560 "Chicago's Morning Answer," Johnson answered questions about the collapse of the years-long Republican effort to repeal and replace Barack Obama's Affordable Care Act, his criticism of the process and McCain's dramatic vote.

In the early morning hours July 28, the Senate narrowly rejected the legislation, with McCain joining Sens. Lisa Murkowski of Alaska and Susan Collins of Maine, delivering a serious blow to President Donald Trump's agenda.

McCain, who had been diagnosed with brain cancer, had returned to the Senate that week for the critical votes, lifting GOP hopes and then dashing them.

"He has a brain tumor right now. That vote occurred at 1:30 in the morning. Some of that might have factored in," Wisconsin's Johnson said.

That surprised the interviewer, who asked, "Really?" and wondered whether the senator's illness and the

late night affected his judgment.

Johnson said he didn't want to speak for any other senator, "I don't know exactly what. ... I really thought John was going to vote yes."

Responding to Johnson, McCain spokeswoman Julie Tarallo said Wednesday, "It is bizarre and deeply unfortunate that Senator Johnson would question the judgment of a colleague and friend. Senator McCain has been very open and clear about the reasons for his vote."

Amid questions about his comments, Johnson issued a statement on Wednesday, saying: "I'm disappointed I didn't more eloquently express my sympathy for what Sen. McCain is going through. I have nothing but respect for him and the vote came at the end of a long day for everyone."

Shortly after his vote, McCain said he opposed the bill because it fell short of the Republican promise to repeal and replace the 2010 law with meaningful reform. McCain returned to Arizona after the vote for radiation and chemotherapy treatments for his brain cancer.

Though Johnson ended up backing Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., on all four key health care votes last month, he was a repeated annoyance for party leaders on the issue.

A week before debate on the bill began in late July, Johnson signaled he might vote against the measure after accusing McConnell of "a real breach of trust." Johnson said McConnell had told moderate GOP senators that Medicaid cuts imposed by the bill would "never happen."

A month earlier, Johnson was among four GOP senators who, minutes after McConnell unveiled his initial bill, said they opposed it. They said in a joint statement the measure fell short of "the most important promise that we made to Americans: to repeal Obamacare and lower their health care costs."

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Associated Press writer Alan Fram contributed to this report.

## **Prosecutor: Tiger Woods to plead guilty to reckless driving**

**By TERRY SPENCER, Associated Press**

PALM BEACH GARDENS, Fla. (AP) — Tiger Woods has agreed to plead guilty to reckless driving and will enter a diversion program that will allow him to have his record wiped clean if he completes the program, a prosecutor said Wednesday.

Woods, 41, was charged with driving under the influence in May when he was found asleep in his Mercedes-Benz, apparently under the influence of a prescription painkiller and sleeping medication. No alcohol was found in his system.

Woods did not appear at the Palm Beach County courthouse for his arraignment. Prosecutor Adrienne Ellis said the golf superstar agreed to plead guilty at an Oct. 25 hearing and enter the county's program for first-time DUI offenders.

"He is not being treated any different than anyone else," Ellis said.

Woods' attorney, Douglas Duncan, entered a not guilty plea to the DUI charge on Woods' behalf and declined comment as he left the courthouse.

Under the plea deal, prosecutors would drop the DUI charge, which is a more severe charge than reckless driving. If he completes the program, he can ask a judge to expunge the reckless driving conviction.

In the diversion program, Woods will spend a year on probation, pay a \$250 fine and court costs, attend DUI school and perform 50 hours of community service. He would also have to attend a workshop where victims of impaired drivers detail how their lives were damaged and face other conditions. Since the program began four years ago, almost 2,400 defendants have enrolled, according to the Palm Beach County State Attorney's Office.

If convicted of DUI, Woods would have faced a fine of between \$500 and \$1,000, had his car impounded for 10 days and other conditions. He also could have been jailed for up to six months, although that was unlikely, received probation and lost his driver's license for six months to a year.

The DUI arrest was the first time Woods had been in trouble since Thanksgiving weekend 2009, when he plowed his SUV into a tree and a fire hydrant outside his then-Windermere, Florida, home. That led

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to revelations that he had multiple extramarital affairs and a divorce from his wife Elin Nordegren, the mother of his two children. He spent 45 days in a Mississippi clinic where he was treated for sex addiction.

Woods was arrested at 2 a.m. May 29 about 15 miles from his home in Jupiter, Florida, when officers found him unconscious in his Mercedes-Benz, which was parked awkwardly on the side of the road and had damage to the driver's side. It's not clear how he damaged the car. Officers checked the area but didn't find that he had hit anything.

Woods didn't know where he was when asked by officers, and he stumbled and swayed through a field sobriety test, police dashboard camera video showed. Woods told officers he was taking the painkiller Vicodin and Xanax, which treats anxiety and insomnia, to cope with his fourth back surgery in April.

Woods announced last month he had completed treatment at an out-of-state clinic to deal with his use of prescription medications.

His 79 PGA Tour victories and 14 major titles both rank No. 2 all-time. He has not competed since February because of his back injury and is not expected to return this year. His last win was in August 2013.

## Kenya awaits vote results amid violence, hacking allegations

By TOM ODULA and CHRISTOPHER TORCHIA, Associated Press

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) — Kenyan police opened fire Wednesday to disperse rioters in several areas after presidential challenger Raila Odinga alleged election fraud, saying hackers used the identity of a murdered official to infiltrate the database of the election commission and manipulate results in favor of President Uhuru Kenyatta. At least three people were killed.

As Kenyatta held a strong lead in provisional results with 96 percent of all polling stations counted, the election commission defended the voting system as secure, saying there were "no interferences before, during and after" Tuesday's election.

Election officials were verifying the final tallies Wednesday night. It was unclear how long it would take, though by law election officials have up to a week from the election to announce the results.

Odinga, a former prime minister, blamed Kenyatta's Jubilee Party for the alleged hacking. "The fraud Jubilee has perpetuated on Kenyans surpasses any level of voter theft in our country's history. This time we caught them," he tweeted.

Soon after Odinga claimed on television that the election had been rigged, angry protesters in the Nairobi slum of Mathare and poor areas in the opposition stronghold of Kisumu in the southwest burned tires, set up roadblocks and clashed with police.

Two people were shot dead in Nairobi as they took advantage of the protests to loot, Nairobi police chief Japheth Koome said. An Associated Press photographer said one was shot in the head. Police killed one person when they opened fire on protesters in another opposition stronghold in Kisii County, said Leonard Katana, a regional police commander.

Many parts of Kenya, East Africa's commercial hub, remained calm, but the violence stirred memories of the unrest that followed the 2007 vote in which more than 1,000 people were killed. Odinga lost that election; he also lost the 2013 vote to Kenyatta and took allegations of vote-tampering to the Supreme Court, which rejected his case.

Odinga on Wednesday claimed that hackers used the identity of Christopher Msando, an election official in charge of managing information technology systems. On July 31, officials announced that Msando had been tortured and killed, alarming Kenyans who feared a recurrence of political violence fueled by ethnic divisions.

Odinga posted online what he said were computer logs proving his allegation. A Tuesday morning entry in the purported computer logs that Odinga posted on Facebook reads: "Login failed for user 'msando'. Reason: The password of the account must be changed."

Rafael Tuju, a top official in Kenyatta's party, said the opposition's claims were unfounded, and Kenya's election commission said it would investigate.

Amid the uncertainty, some Odinga supporters erupted.



"He is not accepting the results and that is why we are on the streets, but police have started shooting," said demonstrator Sebastian Omolo in Kisumu, one of Kenya's largest cities. The western port city on Lake Victoria has been a flashpoint in past elections.

Kisumu shopkeeper Festus Odhiambo said he was praying for peace even as protesters blocked roads into city slums with bonfires and boulders.

Kenya's interior minister, Fred Matiangi, warned against the use of social media to stoke tensions. Officials have said it was unlikely they would shut down the internet but said they might shut down some social media if necessary.

"We assure Kenyans and all residents, the country is safe," said Matiangi. "I urge everyone to go on freely with their daily chores."

## **Pentagon: British firm billed US over \$50M for iffy expenses**

**By RICHARD LARDNER, Associated Press**

WASHINGTON (AP) — A British company hired to train Afghan intelligence officers billed the U.S. government for high-end cars, including Porsches and an Aston Martin, and paid the "significant others" of the firm's top executives six-figure salaries even though there's no proof they did any work, according to details of a Pentagon audit made public Wednesday.

Sen. Clarie McCaskill, D-Mo., said New Century Consulting also spent \$42,000 on automatic weapons, using cash to get around a prohibition in the contract on purchasing the firearms, and showered other personnel with hefty pay and bonuses they hadn't earned. Overall, the military contractor "left taxpayers on the hook for over \$50 million in questionable costs," McCaskill said in a statement.

McCaskill, the top Democrat on the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, summarized the audit's major findings in a letter to Defense Secretary Jim Mattis. She demanded to know which Defense Department office was responsible for overseeing the contractor, what steps are being taken to recover the disputed payments, and whether New Century Consulting will face disciplinary action.

Michael Grunberg, chief executive officer of New Century Consulting, said the company is being portrayed unfairly and that it strives to follow federal acquisition rules. Grunberg said it "is most unfair and is significantly inaccurate" that the executive assistants received excessive salaries.

He said the audit "questioned solely the use and depreciation treatment of vehicles" and that New Century Consulting "accounted for no more than three vehicles across the entire business at any one time." The purchase of the weapons was done properly and at the direction of the U.S.-led command overseeing the training and equipping of the Afghan security forces, according to Grunberg.

McCaskill's disclosure of the audit's key findings is a rare glimpse into the opaque world of battlefield contracting. Contractors are indispensable in Afghanistan, handling security, transportation, construction and more. Yet the Defense Department has faced widespread criticism that it often fails to perform rigorous oversight of the companies and how exactly U.S. taxpayer dollars are spent.

The report also comes amid the tense debate inside the Trump administration over the way ahead in Afghanistan. Two of President Donald Trump's most senior advisers — chief strategist Steve Bannon and son-in-law Jared Kushner — have been advocating for military contractors to fight the war there instead of American forces.

The United States has about 8,400 troops in Afghanistan, and so far Trump has resisted the Pentagon's recommendations to send as many as 4,000 more. The Associated Press reported last week that Blackwater Worldwide founder Erik Prince, the brother of Education Secretary Betsy DeVos, was approached by Trump's top advisers to develop proposals to gradually swap out U.S. troops and put contractors in their place.

The Defense Contract Audit Agency examined New Century Consulting's invoices between fiscal years 2008 and 2013, when it was a subcontractor to another company, Imperatis Corporation. Among the costs charged to the U.S. were expenditures for seven high-end cars — Porsches, Alfa Romeos, a Bentley, an Aston Martin and a Land Rover, according to McCaskill's letter to Mattis. The actual cost of the vehicles

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isn't specified.

"NCC claimed that the vehicles were available to all employees but the vehicles actually were used exclusively by the chief executive officer, chief operating officer, chief financial officer and the significant others of the CEO and CFO," McCaskill told Mattis. Her letter doesn't identify who the significant others are.

These "significant others" also were employed by New Century Consulting as executive assistants and had an average salary in 2012 of close to \$420,000 each even though McCaskill said the company was unable to provide evidence they actually performed any work.

The audit also challenged millions of dollars in compensation for other employees, including the consultants whom the company sent to Afghanistan to train the forces there. McCaskill said the consultants were supposed to be paid at a 100 percent rate when deployed overseas, but only at 60 percent when on leave. But New Century Consulting gave its consultants the full rate regardless of where they were.

"These excessive payments cost taxpayers over \$15 million," she wrote.

New Century Consulting also gave its consultants more than \$3.3 million in bonuses that they either didn't earn or that weren't required by their contracts, according to the senator.

McCaskill said the audit, completed last year, was conducted partly in response to concerns she and Sen. Rob Portman, R-Ohio, had raised after the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction identified a litany of problems with Imperatis' billing and record-keeping practices. The Defense Contract Audit Agency doesn't publicly release its audits.

Imperatis had a contract dating to 2007 for intelligence training in Iraq. The work shifted to Afghanistan in 2010. Three years later the Army Contracting Command awarded New Century Consulting a contract all its own to professionalize the intelligence units within the Afghan ministries of defense and interior. Imperatis went out of business last year.

The two companies were paid \$522.4 million overall, according to contract data compiled by the special inspector general.

Army Contracting Command didn't respond to a request for comment.

McCaskill said the Defense Contract Audit Agency is currently auditing New Century Consulting's billings through early 2016 on the contract it received as its arrangement with Imperatis was ending.

Contact Richard Lardner on Twitter: <http://twitter.com/rplardner>

## Postal Service may get more freedom to raise stamp prices

By HOPE YEN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — It may be time to stock up on Forever stamps.

Regulators appear likely to accept the financially beleaguered Postal Service's request for more freedom to raise the price of mailing letters. It would be the biggest change in the Postal Service's pricing system in nearly a half-century, allowing stamp prices to rise beyond the rate of inflation.

After a 10-year review, the Postal Regulatory Commission could make its decision next month. It might limit how high prices could go, but the cost of a first-class stamp, now 49 cents, could jump. It's not known how much.

Financial analysts praise the plan, but it has raised the ire of the mail-order industry, which could pay millions more for sending items like prescription drugs and magazines and pass the costs onto consumers.

The Postal Service is trying to stay financially afloat as it seeks to invest billions in new delivery trucks to get packages more nimbly to American homes.

An independent agency of government, the Postal Service has lost money for 10 consecutive years. While online shopping has led to years of double-digit growth in its package-delivery business, it hasn't offset declines in first-class mail. Overall mail volume, which makes up more than two-thirds of postal revenue, dropped 27 percent over the last decade as people rely more on email and online bill payments.

Congress' failure to address the Postal Service's underlying financial woes, such as onerous requirements to pre-fund retiree health benefits, has left the commission more likely to embrace the request for more

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pricing freedom. The Postal Service has ruled out closing post offices and ending Saturday delivery to reduce costs.

"We are calling for action from Congress, but we'll do what we have to, based on the reality of what is," Robert Taub, the Republican chairman of the regulatory commission, said in a telephone interview.

He declined to comment on the upcoming decision, but stressed a need to fix the balance sheet at the 242-year-old Postal Service, which generates \$71 billion in annual revenue.

The decision comes as internet sales continue to flourish, led by Amazon, spurring consumer demand for ever-faster and cheaper delivery. Forty percent of the e-commerce giant's packages are delivered by the Postal Service, compared to 20 to 25 percent by United Parcel Service and 15 to 20 percent for FedEx, thanks to lower package delivery rates the Postal Service can offer by tapping into a network that already delivers to every U.S. household six days a week.

Still, growing competition is challenging postal dominance in the "last mile" portion of delivery, the final and usually most expensive stretch of a package's journey to a customer's door. Amazon has been testing the use of drones and launched Amazon Flex, a network of contract drivers similar to courier services offered by Uber. UPS has been trying deliveries via golf carts.

The post office also takes hits for perceived bad service, including Reddit threads devoted to consumer complaints about lackluster home delivery attempts.

"Price increases are long overdue," said David G. Ross, a shipping analyst at Stifel Financial Corp., noting that first-class stamp prices in countries like Germany cost the equivalent of 80 cents or more. He said the Postal Service needs "to make the investment and deliver the packages so that Amazon doesn't have to do it themselves."

But shipping rival UPS views loosened stamp rates as anticompetitive, by having stamps essentially subsidize package deliveries.

If the post office could freely raise stamp prices, UPS wrote the commission in March, mailers would "end up paying for investments and expenses they do not benefit from, while the Postal Service leverages those investments to undercut efficient private-sector rivals in competitive markets."

The periodicals industry argues the Postal Service needs more pricing oversight, because of its monopoly in delivering letter-sized mail.

The Postal Service, which reached its debt limit of \$15 billion and runs perilously low in cash every October, has avoided bankruptcy by defaulting on billions of dollars in the health prepayments. It also has postponed much-needed upgrades to information technology systems.

Still, the Postal Service hopes to replace its vehicles, many 30 years old and wearing down. A purchase order worth up to \$6 billion would cover up to 140,000 trucks. The tall right-hand drive vehicles would accommodate slim letters and oversized packages alike, more akin to fuel-efficient UPS trucks.

A big reason for the Postal Service's losses has been a requirement under a 2006 law that it prefund 75 years' worth of retiree health benefits. Neither the government nor private companies are required to do that.

Bipartisan legislation passed by a House committee would ease much of the problems caused by the law. But it faces uncertain prospects.

Ravi Shanker, an equity analyst at Morgan Stanley, said even if regulators lift the cap on stamp prices, legislation is still needed to address the health payments. "Given the size of the balance sheet hole, the Postal Service would have to raise prices astronomically to fix it," he said.

Ross, the shipping analyst, said the Postal Service would have to show restraint in raising rates or risk losing price-sensitive customers.

Overly high rates, Ross said, would only "accelerate the demise of first-class mail."

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## Braves player trips jogging over chalk line, hurts knee

By CHARLES ODUM, AP Sports Writer

ATLANTA (AP) — Rookie shortstop Johan Camargo suffered a bone bruise in his right knee while jogging onto the field before Tuesday night's game against the Philadelphia Phillies.

Camargo was taking the field when his right knee appeared to lock as he reached down to grab a handful of dirt or touch the chalk on the first-base line. He fell to the ground on the infield grass.

The diagnosis was made following an MRI. The Braves initially said the injury was a hyperextended knee. Camargo, on crutches after the game, attributed the injury to "bad luck."

"I do the same thing every time," Camargo said through a translator.

Camargo was unable to put weight on his right leg when leaving the field. He needed assistance from assistant trainer Jim Lovell and third base coach Ron Washington.

Braves manager Brian Snitker said he's never seen a player get hurt running onto the field.

"That was a first. What a way to start the day," Snitker said after the Braves' 5-2 loss.

Snitker said Camargo will be placed on the disabled list and is expected to miss two weeks.

Jace Peterson replaced Camargo in the lineup at shortstop. Camargo is hitting .292 with three homers and 19 RBIs.

The versatile Camargo became the regular at shortstop when top prospect Dansby Swanson was optioned to Triple-A Gwinnett on July 27. Swanson was hitting .213 with six homers and 35 RBIs when demoted.

Swanson was pulled out of Gwinnett's lineup on Tuesday night shortly after Camargo's injury, a possible sign he could soon return to Atlanta.

Snitker said a final decision on replacing Camargo will be made Wednesday, though he said Swanson "probably" will be recalled.

More AP baseball: <https://apnews.com/tag/MLBbaseball>

## Scientists name prehistoric croc after Lemmy from Motorhead

LONDON (AP) — Scientists have named a prehistoric crocodile described as "one of the nastiest sea creatures to have ever inhabited the earth" after late Motorhead frontman and British heavy metal icon Lemmy Kilmister.

London's Natural History Museum says the fossil of what's now known as Lemmysuchus obtusidens was dug up in England in the early 20th century but was incorrectly categorized with other sea crocodiles found in the area.

Researchers recently took another look at the specimen and gave it a new classification and a scientific name of its own.

The fossil is housed at the museum. Curator Lorna Steel suggested it be named after Kilmister, who died in 2015. She says in a statement that "we'd like to think that he would have raised a glass to Lemmysuchus."

## Kuwait tells AP: North Korean workers welcome amid crisis

By JON GAMBRELL, Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Stalwart U.S. ally Kuwait will continue to grant visas to North Korean laborers whose wages allegedly aid Pyongyang in evading international sanctions, its government told The Associated Press on Thursday before its ruler travels to Washington to meet President Donald Trump.

In a statement responding to an AP story, Kuwait also said it never stopped issuing work visas for North Koreans, refuting a major State Department human trafficking report released in June that applauded the Mideast nation for taking steps to limit their presence.

Kuwait's response shows the challenge the U.S. faces in trying to convince Gulf nations to cut back on using thousands of North Korean workers on major construction projects and to close government-run restaurants in the region. Experts and analysts say the money earned from those enterprises helps

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Pyongyang buy luxury goods and build the missiles it now uses to threaten the U.S. territory of Guam, as well as other parts of the U.S. and America's Asian allies.

Kuwait currently hosts 6,064 North Korean laborers, the country's Public Authority of Manpower said in a statement sent to the AP by the Information Ministry.

That's more than double the estimate offered by two officials with knowledge of Pyongyang's operations in the Gulf who spoke to the AP. Speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss intelligence reports, they earlier said some 2,500 North Koreans worked in Kuwait.

Kuwait also dismissed the notion it cut off the laborers from coming to its construction sites.

"There are no plans to expel North Korean laborers and Kuwait has never done so," the statement said.

However, in June, the State Department said that Kuwait had stopped issuing new worker visas to North Korean laborers. Former Secretary of State John Kerry also had applauded Kuwait in 2016 for stopping direct flights by North Korea's state-run Air Koryo as a means to stop "an illegal and illegitimate regime in North Korea."

The State Department's June report alleged that since 2008, North Korea sent over 4,000 laborers to Kuwait "for forced labor on construction projects, sourced by a North Korean company operated by the Workers' Party of Korea and the North Korean military."

"According to these reports, employees work 14 to 16 hours a day while the company retains 80 to 90 percent of the workers' wages, and monitors and confines the workers, who live in impoverished conditions and are in very poor health due to lack of adequate nutrition and health care," the State Department said.

The U.S. Embassy in Kuwait City did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Most North Korean workers in the Gulf earn around \$1,000 a month, with about half being kept by the North Korean government and another \$300 going toward construction company managers, the officials said. That leaves workers receiving \$200 for working straight through an entire month, they said. Even \$200 a month can go a long way in North Korea, where the per-capita income is estimated at just \$1,700 a year.

Outside of Kuwait, Pyongyang sends workers to the Gulf countries of Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, all U.S. allies. The workers face conditions akin to forced labor while being spied on by planted intelligence officers, eating little food and suffering physical abuse, analysts and officials say.

Gulf nations keep their ties with North Korea largely quiet while supplying oil and natural gas crucial to the economies of Pyongyang adversaries South Korea and Japan.

For Kuwait, the ongoing North Korea crisis puts the tiny, oil-rich nation in a tough position diplomatically. Kuwaitis even today will embrace Americans they meet in the street over the U.S.-led 1991 war that ended Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein's occupation of the country.

The country hosts some 13,500 American troops, many at Camp Arifjan south of Kuwait City, which also is home to the forward command of U.S. Army Central. Guam, which Pyongyang now threatens to target, hosts 7,000 American troops — showing the strategic importance of Kuwait to the U.S.

But Kuwait also hosts North Korea's only embassy in the Gulf, through which Pyongyang conducts all its diplomatic affairs.

Kuwait's 88-year-old ruler, Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah, is scheduled to travel to Washington in September to meet Trump. The visit by Sheikh Sabah comes as he's been trying to mediate a dispute between Qatar and Arab nations, though North Korea potentially could come up at the meeting as well.

However, Kuwait's long embrace of America shouldn't be seen as it giving up making its own foreign policy decisions, said Shafeeq Ghabra, a political science professor at Kuwait University. Hosting North Korean laborers is part of that, he said.

"Being very close doesn't mean we become identical," Ghabra said.

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Follow Jon Gambrell on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/jongambrellap](http://www.twitter.com/jongambrellap). His work can be found at <http://apne.ws/2galNpz>.

## Free-speech debate swirls as officials block on social media

By **BRADY McCOMBS, Associated Press**

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — An emerging debate about whether elected officials violate people's free speech rights by blocking them on social media is spreading across the U.S. as groups sue or warn politicians to stop the practice.

The American Civil Liberties Union this week sued Maine Gov. Paul LePage and sent warning letters to Utah's congressional delegation. It followed recent lawsuits against the governors of Maryland and Kentucky and President Donald Trump.

Trump's frequent and often unorthodox use of Twitter and allegations he blocks people with dissenting views has raised questions about what elected officials can and cannot do on their official social media pages.

Politicians at all levels increasingly embrace social media to discuss government business, sometimes at the expense of traditional town halls or in-person meetings.

"People turn to social media because they see their elected officials as being available there and they're hungry for opportunities to express their opinions and share feedback," said Anna Thomas, spokeswoman for the ACLU of Utah. "That includes people who disagree with public officials."

Most of the officials targeted so far — all Republicans — say they are not violating free speech but policing social media pages to get rid of people who post hateful, violent, obscene or abusive messages.

A spokeswoman for Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan called the Aug. 1 lawsuit against him "frivolous" and said his office has a clear policy and will "remove all hateful and violent content" and "coordinated spam attacks."

The ACLU accused Kentucky Gov. Matt Bevin of blocking more than 600 people on Facebook and Twitter. His office said he blocks people who post "obscene and abusive language or images, or repeated off-topic comments and spam."

Spokesmen for Utah Sen. Orrin Hatch and Rep. Mia Love, who were singled out by the ACLU, said people are rarely blocked and only after they have violated rules posted on their Facebook pages to prevent profanity, vulgarity, personal insults or obscene comments.

"We are under no obligation to allow Senator Hatch's Facebook page to be used as a platform for offensive content or misinformation," spokesman Matt Whitlock said.

Katie Fallow, senior staff attorney at Columbia University's Knight First Amendment Institute, which sued Trump last month, said there's no coordinated national effort to target Republicans. The goal is to establish that all elected officials — no matter the party — must stop blocking people on social media.

"If it's mainly used to speak to and hear from constituents, that's a public forum and you can't pick and choose who you hear from," Fallow said.

Rob Anderson, chairman of Utah's Republican Party, scoffed at the notion that politicians are violating free-speech rights by weeding out people who post abusive content.

"You own your Facebook page and if you want to block somebody or hide somebody, that's up to you," Anderson said. "Why else is there a tab that says hide or block?"

Court decisions about how elected officials can and cannot use their accounts are still lacking in this new legal battleground, but rules for public forums side with free-speech advocates, said Erwin Chemerinsky, dean of the University of California-Berkeley Law School.

For instance, lower court rulings say the government can't deny credentials to journalists because their reporting is critical, he said.

"These are government officials communicating about government business. They can't pick or choose based on who they like or who likes them," Chemerinsky said.

But public officials may be able to legally defend the way they police their social media pages if they prove their decisions are applied evenly.

"It's got to be content-neutral," Chemerinsky said.

Trump's use of social media and the Supreme Court's decision in June striking down a North Carolina

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law that barred convicted sex offenders from social media is driving the increased attention to the issue, said Amanda Shanor, a fellow at the Information Society Project at Yale Law School.

"More and more of our political discussion is happening online," Shanor said. "It's more important that we know what these rules are."

## Asian stocks mostly lower on growing unease over North Korea

By YURI KAGEYAMA, AP Business Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Asian stocks are mostly lower as investors ponder escalating tensions over North Korea's nuclear ambitions.

KEEPING SCORE: Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 slipped 0.2 percent to 19,705.96. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 edged up 0.2 percent to 5,779.20, while South Korea's Kospi fell 1.1 percent to 2,342.19. Hong Kong's Hang Seng dipped 1.6 percent to 27,314.74. The Shanghai Composite slipped 1.1 percent to 3,240.69.

NORTH KOREA: President Donald Trump warned North Korea of "fire and fury" this week in response to recent threats from Pyongyang, which said it was examining plans for attacking Guam, a U.S. territory in the Pacific with a military base. Trump's comments followed reports the North has mastered a technology needed to strike the United States with a nuclear missile.

WALL STREET: Investors' unease over such escalating tensions weighed on stocks earlier in the day, although that settled by the end of the day. The Standard & Poor's 500 index was nearly flat at 2,474.02. The Dow Jones industrial average slid 0.2 percent to 22,048.70. The Nasdaq composite lost 0.3 percent to 6,352.33.

THE QUOTE: "Risk-averse sentiment is dominating global equities markets, and U.S. indices have retraced from record levels over the last two days. Although it is considered highly unlikely that this tension will escalate into a nuclear war, the market still needs to see how President Trump will eventually deal with his advocating 'fire and fury' against North Korea's threat," said Margaret Yang Yan, market analyst at CMC Markets Singapore.

JAPAN MACHINERY DISAPPOINTS: Orders for machinery in June, considered a leading economic indicator, were slower than analysts had forecast and at their weakest since May 2016. Orders fell 4.7 percent from the previous quarter in April-June, suggesting demand is weaker than expected, though economists say such measures are not overly important.

ENERGY: Benchmark U.S. crude gained 1 cent to \$49.57 a barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. It added 39 cents to \$49.56 a barrel overnight. Brent crude, used to price international oils, added 4 cents to \$52.74.

CURRENCIES: The dollar slipped to 110.00 yen from 110.06 late Wednesday in Asia. The euro fell to \$1.1735 from \$1.1757.

Follow Yuri Kageyama on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/yurikageyama>

Her work can be found at <https://www.apnews.com/search/yuri%20kageyama>

## Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Thursday, Aug. 10, the 222nd day of 2017. There are 143 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On August 10, 1977, postal employee David Berkowitz was arrested in Yonkers, New York, accused of being "Son of Sam," the gunman who killed six people and wounded seven others in the New York City area. (Berkowitz is serving six consecutive 25-years-to-life sentences.)

On this date:

In 1680, Pueblo Indians launched a successful revolt against Spanish colonists in present-day New Mexico.

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In 1792, during the French Revolution, mobs in Paris attacked the Tuileries (TWEE'-luh-reez) Palace, where King Louis XVI resided. (The king was later arrested, put on trial for treason, and executed.)

In 1821, Missouri became the 24th state.

In 1846, President James K. Polk signed a measure establishing the Smithsonian Institution.

In 1874, Herbert Clark Hoover, the 31st president of the United States, was born in West Branch, Iowa.

In 1921, Franklin D. Roosevelt was stricken with polio at his summer home on the Canadian island of Campobello.

In 1949, the National Military Establishment was renamed the Department of Defense.

In 1962, the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library and Museum was dedicated in West Branch, Iowa, on the 88th birthday of the former president, who attended the ceremony along with former President Harry S. Truman. Marvel Comics superhero Spider-Man made his debut in issue 15 of "Amazing Fantasy" (cover price: 12 cents).

In 1969, Leno and Rosemary LaBianca were murdered in their Los Angeles home by members of Charles Manson's cult, one day after actress Sharon Tate and four other people were slain.

In 1988, President Ronald Reagan signed a measure providing \$20,000 payments to still-living Japanese-Americans who were interned by their government during World War II.

In 1991, nine Buddhists were found slain at their temple outside Phoenix, Arizona. (Two teen-agers were later arrested; one was sentenced to life in prison, while the other received 281 years.)

In 1993, Ruth Bader Ginsburg was sworn in as the second female justice on the U.S. Supreme Court.

Ten years ago: Three men being lowered into a southern Indiana coal mine were killed when a nylon sling attached to the bucket the men were riding in got caught, causing the bucket to tip and sending them plummeting more than 500 feet to their deaths.

Five years ago: A man in an Afghan army uniform shot and killed three American service members in southern Afghanistan; the Taliban claimed the shooter joined the insurgency after the attack. At the London Olympics, the United States won the women's 4x100-meter track relay in a world-record time of 40.82 seconds to give the Americans their first victory in the event since 1996.

One year ago: During a raucous campaign rally outside Fort Lauderdale, Florida, Republican Donald Trump accused President Barack Obama of being the "founder" of the Islamic State group. (Trump later said he was "being sarcastic" before adding, "but not that sarcastic, to be honest with you.") Lonnie Franklin Jr., the Los Angeles serial killer known as the "Grim Sleeper," was sentenced to death for the murders of nine women and a teenage girl. At the Rio Olympics, Katie Ledecky turned in another overpowering performance to carry the United States to victory in the 4x200-meter freestyle relay. John Saunders, the versatile sportscaster who hosted ESPN's "The Sports Reporters" for 15 years, died in Hastings-on-Hudson, New York, at age 61.

Today's Birthdays: Actress Rhonda Fleming is 94. Singer Ronnie Spector is 74. Actor James Reynolds is 71. Rock singer-musician Ian Anderson (Jethro Tull) is 70. Country musician Gene Johnson (Diamond Rio) is 68. Singer Patti Austin is 67. Actor Daniel Hugh Kelly is 65. Folk singer-songwriter Sam Baker is 63. Actress Rosanna Arquette is 58. Actor Antonio Banderas is 57. Rock musician Jon Farriss (INXS) is 56. Singer Julia Fordham is 55. Journalist-blogger Andrew Sullivan is 54. Actor Chris Caldovino is 54. Singer Neneh Cherry is 53. Singer Aaron Hall is 53. Boxer Riddick Bowe is 50. Actor Sean Blakemore is 50. Rhythm-and-blues singer Lorraine Pearson (Five Star) is 50. Singer-producer Michael Bivins is 49. Actor-writer Justin Theroux is 46. Actress Angie Harmon is 45. Country singer Jennifer Hanson is 44. Actor-turned-lawyer Craig Kirkwood is 43. Actress JoAnna Garcia Swisher is 38. Singer Cary Ann Hearst (Shovels & Rope) is 38. Rhythm-and-blues singer Nikki Bratcher (Divine) is 37. Actor Aaron Staton is 37. Actor Ryan Eggold is 33. Actor Charley Koontz is 30. Actor Lucas Till is 27. Reality TV star Kylie Jenner is 20.

Thought for Today: "There is no adequate defense, except stupidity, against the impact of a new idea."  
— Percy Williams Bridgeman, American scientist (1882-1961).