

Groton Daily Independent

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Chicken Soup
for the Soul

“Good as it is to inherit a library, it is better to collect one.”

-Augustine Birrell



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Harry Implement

“Family Owned & Operated Since 1935!”



(605) 395-6421

Ferney

Friday, December 1st
State Oral Interp at Aberdeen Central

Saturday, December 2nd
Groton hosts JH GBB Jamboree
with Langford, Northwestern, Waubay-
Summit starting at 10 a.m.
Wrestling at Clark, 10 a.m.

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

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

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Groton Coffee Cup League

Team Standings: James Valley 27, Ten Pins 27, Kens 25 1/2, Jungle Lanes 16 1/2.

High Games: Joyce Walter 200, Sandi Bistodeau 181, Sue Stanley 173.

High Series: Joyce Walter 511, Sue Stanley 482, Sandi Bistodeau 430.

Conde National League

Team Standings: Colts 28, Mets 26, Cubs 25 1/2, Pirates 24 1/2, Giants 24, Braves 15.

Men's High Games: Rus Bethke 235, John Lowary 207, Larry Frohling 187.

Men's High Series: Rus Bethke 570, Lance Frohling 516, Butch Farmen 498.

Women's High Games: Mary Larson 180, 171; Joyce Walter 174, 160; Nancy Radke 174; Vickie Kramp 169.

Women's High Series: Mary Larson 501, Joyce Walter 469, Nancy Radke 442.

NEW SIGN-ON BONUSES!

☆☆☆ **\$1,500 for CNAs** ☆☆☆

☆☆☆ **\$3,000 for LPNs** ☆☆☆

☆☆☆ **\$4,500 for RNs** ☆☆☆

Contact Brynn Pickrel or Nellie Hatfield at 605-397-2365
or apply in person.

EOE/AA/M/F/V/D-Drug Free Workplace



GROTON

CARE & REHABILITATION CENTER

1106 N. 2nd Street, Groton
605-397-2365

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All auto owners!
Save \$2-\$4 /tank
& grow your local economy
by choosing low carbon
Super Premium E30's
94 octane, more power,
same mileage, fewer
carbon deposits, lower
maintenance costs,
slashed benzene & related
genotoxic, carcinogenic
tailpipe emissions;
*see sdfu.org's E30 tab for
info, E30 prices\locations.

***Farmers Union's
PSA: Courtesy Merle
Anderson (Merle is 94
year old founder of Ace
and legendary ethanol
supporter... "because it is
the right thing to do")**



GDI News

21 N Main

Shake the dice for a
discount on a Groton
Daily Independent or
print edition of the
Groton Independent
subscription

GDI Clean

19 N Main

Register for a roll of
quarters

GDI Fit

13 N Main

Register for a free
3-month membership

Wednesday, Nov. 29

6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

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Brown County 4-H Celebrates 83 Years

Brown County 4-H celebrated 83 years of "Making the Best Better" on Sunday, November 5 at the annual 4-H Recognition Event held at the Schriver's Memorial Fellowship Center.

Bath residents Kathy and Scott Sperry and Groton Vet Clinic of Groton were recognized for their 2017 "Meritorious Service to 4-H".

Kathy and Scott Sperry have been volunteering in Brown County since 1985. They assisted with judging several project areas, record books, & events such as special foods. Once they had children old enough for 4-H they joined the Dakota Sharpshooters 4-H club before starting their own club, the Dream Reachers a few years later. They are club leaders & volunteer on several committees both locally & state wide. When a new fundraising opportunity arose, they took the lead to help bring the 4-H fruit sales to our county. They are also on the state 4-H performing arts board & are heavily involved with that program. Scott & Kathy Sperry bleed green & have dedicated their lives to helping the 4-H program grow in South Dakota. They have touched the lives of many. Thank you for all you have done for the 4-H program!

Groton Vet Clinic has been a major supporter of the Brown County 4-H program for many years. From helping the 4-H producers in the area prepare for the different events throughout the summer to housing the Brown County 4-H beef weigh-in. Thank you for your continued support in the Brown County 4-H Program and its members!

Brown County leaders were honored for their years of service to the 4-H Program. Darrin Olson of Rural Lads and Lassies 4-H Club and Kim Bitz with the Brown County 4-H Archery program received 10-year gold pins. Janet Wright, Friendly Fellows & Daises 4-H Club, received a 15-year Pearl Inset clover and Michelle Weber of Denim and Dust 4-H Club and Barb Hoops of Rondell Robin 4-H Club received 20-year Diamond Peal Inset Clovers. Mike Frey of the Friendly Fellows and Daisies 4-H Club received a 25-year Emerald insert Clover.

Graduating from the Brown County 4-H program were: Megan Malsam, Dan Sharp, Trey Wright, Landon Marzahn, Wade Wagemann, Michaela Olson, and Brendan Muldoon

Several 4-H members were recognized for selection and participation in various Regional and National 4-H Conferences and Events: Daniel Sharp, Travis Sharp, Matthew Sperry, Madelyn Wright, Adrienne Schaunaman, Cassandra Townsend, and Trey Wright were recognized for the 4-H National Western Round-Up in Denver. Matthew Sperry was honored for his participation in the Teen Leadership Conference. Sperry was also recognized for State 4-H Youth Council and National 4-H Conference participation. Brown County had one participant that attended Citizen Washington Focus, held in Washington D.C. and that was Madilyn Wright.

Many Brown County 4-H members, teams and clubs were recognized or awarded certificates, medals, plaques, trophies and other awards for their participation and accomplishments in 4-H projects, events and activities throughout the past 4-H year. A complete list of awards can be found at the Brown County 4-H Facebook page.

Over three hundred young people participate in the Brown County 4-H Program. Seventy-five volunteers assist club members in a variety of project areas.

For more information about becoming a part of 4-H contact the Brown County 4-H office at 605-626-7120 or visit Brown County 4-H on Facebook.

Eat Healthy Even on the Go with Batch Cooking Freezer Meals

BROOKINGS, S.D. - With a little planning and some batch cooking South Dakotans can have some healthful meals on hand for time crunches and drop in guests.

"This concept of batch cooking or freezer meals is taking hold for some families in an effort to reduce the amount of money spent on food, and to have meals on hand which are healthy and wholesome," said Hope Kleine, SDSU Extension Health Education Field Specialist.

About Batch Cooking

Batch cooking refers to making quantity recipes, which are often frozen. The entrée is prepared from fresh foods and frozen in family portions, which can easily be pulled from the freezer and re-heated at a later date.

"The cost of meals prepared at home is generally less than the cost of prepared ready-to-eat frozen entrées, deli foods and eating out," Kleine explained. "With home prepared meals you have the ability to control the amount of sodium and calories, and limit the amount of preservatives."

Make meal prep fun

Batch cooking can also be an opportunity to get together with friends. "Groups of friends can get together and make quantity recipes or exchange dishes, and divide the portions and cost among those involved," she said.

For example, in a group of three, one makes three pans of lasagna, one makes three batches of beef soup, and one makes three batches of chicken pot pie. In the end, each member gets a pan of lasagna, a batch of soup, and chicken pot pie ready for freezing and later use.

Batch Cooking Tips

Test it first: Before making a quantity recipe, make one recipe and have group participants taste test it. "Remember, what you like in a good lasagna dish may not be what our friend likes," Kleine said.

Double up:

Prepare multiple batches of main ingredients, such as beef, pork, chicken, etc.

"If you are cooking up ground beef, it's just as easy to cook up a double or triple batch and freeze the extra servings," Kleine said. "Simply reheat for tacos or your favorite casserole, and you have yourself a shortcut for those last minute meals."

Easy clean up begins here: Line casseroles and pans with parchment paper so that once the dish is prepared and frozen, it may be taken out of the container. This prevents having to have large number of pans/dishes. Then, simply wrap the item in saran wrap, and place into a Ziploc freezer bag.

Note of caution: Pyrex or glass in a freezer is easily broken.

Date and label:

Date and label the items frozen. Provide directions for re-heating within the package as well as packaging extras in the wrapped item, i.e. a package of shredded cheese with the frozen package of lasagna so when you are ready to take it out, you have the topping available.

Defrost the night before:

If an item is going to be baked, generally you will need to defrost the item in the refrigerator the night or day before.

Note: Do not put partially thawed or frozen food in a Pyrex or glass dish in an oven set on the pre-heat setting. When pre-heating, the oven operates at a high temperature which may cause a dish to break or explode.

Know your options:

Keep a list of items in the freezer so they can be eaten in a reasonable time. Generally, it is best to consume frozen foods within one year of freezing them.

Balance the meal out: When it comes to a meal time, all you need to do is defrost the entrée, add a fresh salad or fruit and pour a glass of milk to complete your meal.

Food safety: Keep food safety in mind. When freezing, have the items somewhat cooled before they are put in the freezer. Also, do not fill the freezer too full to prevent items to be cooled below 40 degrees in a period of 2 or less hours.

*Holiday Party
Olive Grove Golf Course*

*Tour of Homes
& Silent Auction*

*Hors d'oeuvres, coffee & cider served at golf course.
Saturday, December 2 - Tours 4 pm to 8 pm
Party 4pm to Close*

*\$12 per person. - Tickets can be purchased at:
Groton Ford, Lori's Pharmacy, Olde Bank Floral' N More,
Hair & Co. (423 Moccasin Dr., Aberdeen, SD) or
by calling Vicki Walter 380-0480 or
Brenda Waage 380-9419*

*Thanks to the following homeowners on tour:
Nick & Jenna Strom, Bruce & Karyn Babcock,
Tom & Emily Sternhagen, Chad & Chanise Pray,*

*Fundraiser
(Proceeds for course
equipment)*

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Today in Weather History

November 29, 1896: The mercury plunged to 51 degrees below zero at Havre Montana. It marked the culmination of a two week long cold wave. A stagnate high-pressure area similar to those over Siberia during the winter was the cause. During the month of November temperatures across Montana and the Dakotas averaged 15 to 25 degrees below normal. Aberdeen's low temperature on this day was 25 degrees below zero. The average temperature for the month was 9.7 degrees, or 19.6 degrees below normal.

November 29, 1996: Widespread freezing rain laid down a thick layer of ice across a large part of north-east South Dakota and west central Minnesota on the 29th and 30th, making driving on area highways and Interstate 29 treacherous. Later on the 29th, the freezing rain changed over to snow. Snowfall amounts ranged from 2 to 4 inches across the area. Numerous accidents occurred throughout the weekend with mainly minor injuries. Many cars and trucks also went into ditches. The South Dakota Highway Patrol reported in, one three hour period that along I-29, from the Clear Lake exit to the Codington County line 40 to 45 vehicles were in the ditch. Many activities and sporting events were also postponed or cancelled.

November 29, 2002: High winds of 30 to 50 mph, gusting to near 70 mph, occurred much of the afternoon across central and north central South Dakota. A tractor-trailer, carrying a load of livestock, was overturned on Highway 12 about three miles east of Mobridge. The tractor was totaled, four cattle were killed, and the driver suffered minor injuries. High winds of 30 to 50 mph, with gusts to near 60 mph, also occurred across Roberts and Grant counties in the late afternoon hours.

1896 - The mercury plunged to 51 degrees below zero at Havre, MT. It marked the culmination of a two week long cold wave caused by a stagnate high pressure area similar to those over Siberia during the winter. During the month of November temperatures across Montana and the Dakotas averaged 15 to 25 degrees below normal. (David Ludlum)

1969 - Dense fog along the Jersey Turnpike resulted in a chain reaction of vehicle collisions during the morning rush hour. A propane truck jackknifed and was struck by a trailer truck, and other vehicles piled into the fiery mass. (David Ludlum)

1975 - Red River was buried under 34 inches of snow in 24 hours, establishing a record for the state of New Mexico. (The Weather Channel)

1985 - The temperature at Bismarck, ND, plunged to 30 degrees below zero to establish their record low for the month of November. The high that day was 4 degrees below zero. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Snow blanketed the Upper Mississippi Valley, with heavy snow reported near Lake Superior. Up to ten inches of snow was reported in Douglas County and Bayfield County of Wisconsin. Brule WI received nine inches of snow. Heavy rain soaked the Middle Atlantic Coast States, while gale force winds lashed the coastline. Flooding was reported in Maryland and Virginia. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Nine inches of snow at Alta UT brought their total for the month to 164 inches, surpassing their previous November record of 144 inches. Snowbird UT, also in the Little Cottonwood Valley, surpassed their November record of 118 inches of snow. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Strong Santa Ana winds diminished over southern California, but record cold was reported in some of the California valleys, with readings of 27 degrees at Redding and 31 degrees at Bakersfield. Gale force winds, gusting to 44 mph at Milwaukee WI, produced snow squalls in the Great Lakes Region. Sault Ste Marie MI finished the month of November with a record 46.8 inches of snow. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

November 29, 1991: A tornado struck southeast Springfield, Missouri, causing F4 damage. Shortly after touchdown, the tornado reached F3 intensity, approximately 3 miles north of the town of Nixa. While crossing Highway 65, the tornado picked up a truck and dropped it onto a frontage road, killing one passenger and injuring ten others. The tornado intensified to F4 strength as it moved through the Woodbridge and Natural Bridge Estates subdivisions where 15 homes were destroyed. Altogether, two people were killed and 64 others were injured.

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Today	Tonight	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday
						
Sunny and Windy	Partly Cloudy and Breezy then Clear	Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Partly Sunny	Mostly Clear	Mostly Sunny
High: 53 °F	Low: 30 °F	High: 47 °F	Low: 24 °F	High: 47 °F	Low: 25 °F	High: 47 °F



Windy Dry And Mild Today



Highs: Upper 40s Northeast to Near 60 Central

**Strong South Winds James Valley East
(Morning Into Early/Mid Afternoon)**

**Strong West Winds West River
(Early/Mid Afternoon Through Early Evening)**

 weather.gov/Aberdeen  National Weather Service Aberdeen  @NWSAberdeen Updated: 11/29/2017 5:21 AM Central

Published on: 11/29/2017 at 5:34AM

Strong winds return to the Dakotas today with gusty south winds across the east early before a trough moves in and winds shift to the west and become gusty. This will raise the fire weather threat across the region today. Mild but less windy conditions are expected to continue through the rest of the work week.

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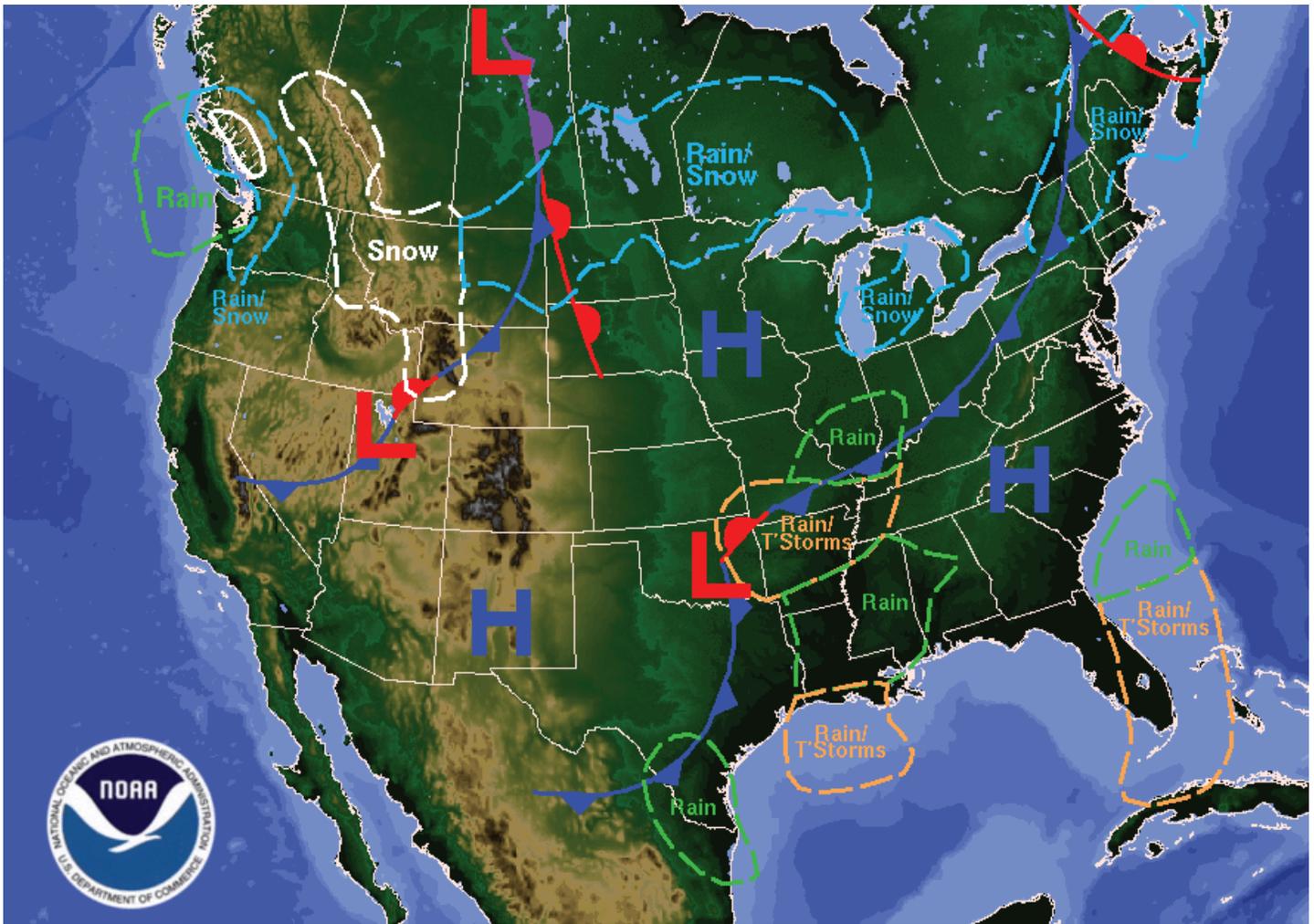
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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 48.7
Low Outside Temp: 21.7
High Gust: 31
Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 55° in 1951
Record Low: -26° in 1964
Average High: 32°F
Average Low: 12°F
Average Precip in Nov: .71
Precip to date in Nov: 0.00
Average Precip to date: 21.18
Precip Year to Date: 13.47
Sunset Tonight: 4:52 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:52 a.m.



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Wed, Nov 29, 2017, issued 4:42 AM EST
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by McReynolds 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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PASS IT ON!

"How many more times do I have to tell you before you remember what I'm trying to teach you?" asked Jim's Dad.

"Probably as many times as it takes for me to see what's in it for me," answered Jim.

Most of us have been involved in similar "discussions." Some "lessons" are more difficult to learn than others if we see no immediate benefits.

So it was with the Children of Israel. Psalm 78 begins with a plea from God: "Oh my people, hear my teaching!" Notice that God is pleading with His people to hear Him. There is a difference between listening and hearing. We often listen but do not hear. So God emphasized that fact: "listen to the words of my mouth."

Of course we want to know what He means when He asks us to "listen to the words of my mouth."

Then, as now, many only listen when any speaker has anything to say that has value to them – even God. If we do not believe that the words of the speaker – even God – will benefit us personally and tangibly we will not hear their voice. Sadly, what was true then is true today.

God spoke to the Israelites many times on many different occasions through many different individuals and unexpected miracles. Yet, His message did not penetrate into the depth of their hearts and make a lasting impression in their lives. They seemed to forget the importance of His teachings and paid a price.

If we listen to and obey His Word, He will reward us.

Prayer: We pray, Father, for ears that listen to Your voice and hearts that are open and obedient to Your Word. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 78:1, 2 My people, hear my teaching; listen to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth with a parable; I will utter hidden things, things from of old.

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2018 Groton SD Community Events

- Groton Lion's Club Bingo- Wednesday Nights 6:30pm at the Groton Legion (Year Round)
- 11/18/2017-3/31/2018 Groton Lion's Club Wheel of Meat- Saturday Nights 7pm at the Groton Legion (Fall/Winter Months)
- 1/28/2018 Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm
- 3/24/2018 Easter Egg Hunt (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
- 5/5/2018 Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday in May)
- 5/28/2018 Groton American Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Program at the Cemetery, Lunch to follow at the American Legion (Memorial Day)
- 6/14/2018 Transit Fundraiser (Middle Thursday in June)
- 6/15/2018 SDSU Golf at Olive Grove
- 6/16/2018 Triathlon (Saturday before Father's Day)
- 7/4/2018 Firecracker Golf Tourney (4th of July)
- 7/22/2018 Summer Fest (4th Sunday in July)
- 9/8/2018 Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
- 10/6/2018 Pumpkin Fest (Saturday before Columbus Day)
- 10/12/2018 Band Festival (2nd Friday in October)
- 10/31/2018 Trunk or Treat (Halloween)
- 11/10/2018 Groton American Legion Post #39 Turkey Shoot (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)

- Best Ball Golf Tourney
- SDSU Golf Tourney
- Sunflower Golf Tourney
- Santa Claus Day
- Fireman's Stag
- Tour of Homes
- Crazy Dayz/Open Houses
- School Events

News from the Associated Press

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

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

Mega Millions

10-17-47-51-61, Mega Ball: 5, Megaplier: 2

(ten, seventeen, forty-seven, fifty-one, sixty-one; Mega Ball: five; Megaplier: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$132 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$163 million

Jenkins lifts S Dakota St over Ole Miss 99-97 in OT

OXFORD, Miss. (AP) — David Jenkins Jr. scored 22 points, including six straight to close out overtime on Tuesday night as South Dakota State defeated Mississippi 99-97.

Mike Daum scored a game-high 26 points for the Jackrabbits (7-2) and Reed Tellinghuisen added 19, including the go-ahead 3-point shot, 93-91, with 1:28 left in overtime. Jenkins followed with two free throws and a pair of contested baskets to preserve the win.

"We preach about togetherness and we had it tonight," South Dakota State coach T.J. Otzelberger said. "David was tremendous late in overtime and our guys never folded when they charged hard at us in the second half and overtime. I'm so proud of them."

Ole Miss (4-2) was led by Terence Davis with 22 points before fouling out late in regulation. Markel Crawford and Deandre Burnett scored 19 points apiece for the Rebels, who rallied from a 23-point first-half deficit and trailed 55-35 at halftime.

"We did not show the sense of urgency we needed to start this game," Mississippi coach Andy Kennedy said. "But South Dakota State put on a clinic in the first half and they made the big plays at the end to get it. They deserve the credit."

South Dakota State, which earned the automatic NCAA Tournament berth last year from the Summit Conference, shot 35 of 74 (47 percent) from the field, including 18 of 41 (44 percent) from 3-point range. Daum and Tellinghuisen accounted for 11 from the 3-point line as six different Jackrabbits hit a 3-point shot.

Ole Miss was 36 of 72 (50 percent), primarily on the strength of Davis and Crawford, who combined to finish 17 of 30 from the field. The Rebels struggled from 3-point range, hitting 7 of 27 (26 percent), and the free throw line, 18 of 27 (66 percent).

BIG PICTURE

South Dakota State: The Jackrabbits, the preseason top pick in the Summit Conference, improved to 2-1 against Power Five conference teams, defeating Iowa and Ole Miss, after losing at Kansas. South Dakota State started 11 of 13 from 3-point range and led 51-28 late in the first half.

Jenkins led the late surge as the Jackrabbits were 4 of 4 from the field and 4 of 4 from the free throw line in the final three minutes of overtime.

"We played an almost perfect first half," Otzelberger said. "We played really well in the final minutes of overtime. We had to have it in those two stretches to win."

Ole Miss: The Rebels missed 13 consecutive 3-point shots before Crawford broke the streak with 2:25 left in the first half. Ole Miss was outrebounded 44-41, but Marcanvis Hyman had a game-high 11 rebounds. The Rebels held an 82-78 lead with 1:57 left in regulation, but were shut out after Davis fouled out.

STAR POWER

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The showcase players for each squad, Daum for South Dakota State and Davis for Ole Miss, turned in strong floor games to complement their scoring outputs.

Daum added seven rebounds and three steals while occasionally dribbling through full-court pressure. The 6-9 junior forward had 16 first-half points and handled the ball effectively on the perimeter.

Davis, a slashing 6-4 junior guard, finished with nine rebounds, four assists and a steal. Davis had 20 points to ignite a second-half comeback and showcased a pair of acrobatic baskets to finish fast-break opportunities.

UP NEXT

South Dakota State: The Jackrabbits face Missouri State on Saturday at a neutral site game in Sioux Falls.
Ole Miss: The Rebels host Virginia Tech on Saturday.

N Dakota beats Presentation 82-75 on Avants' career night

GRAND FORKS, N.D. (AP) — Conner Avants scored a career-high 24 points on 10-of-15 shooting, Geno Crandall added 20 points with five assists, and North Dakota never trailed in beating NAIA Presentation College 82-75 on Tuesday night.

Marlon Stewart had a career-high nine of the 24 assists the Fighting Hawks (4-3) used in making 35 of 64 shots from the field (54.7 percent) and 6 of 27 from long distance (22.2 percent). Tray Buchanan had 10 points and Dale Jones grabbed 10 rebounds.

Avants scored six points in North Dakota's 14-4 opening run and the Fighting Hawks pulled away on a 13-0 run in which Avants scored six more. Crandall scored his 14th point of the half and North Dakota led 45-31 at halftime.

Avants' jumper kicked off an 11-2 run and North Dakota led by 22 early in the second half. Julius Jackson scored five points amid the Saints' final 11-2 run while the Fighting Hawks went scoreless for more than two minutes until Crandall's jumper with 1:33 to play.

Jackson scored 32 points on 14-of-23 shooting, Deiontay Walters added 22 points, and Quadre Lollis had 11 boards for the Saints.

Report: Keystone pipeline leak likely caused by 2008 damage

AMHERST, S.D. (AP) — A federal agency says a leak in TransCanada Corp.'s Keystone oil pipeline in South Dakota likely was caused by damage during construction in 2008.

The Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration issued a corrective action report Tuesday on the estimated 210,000-gallon oil spill. The report says a weight installed on the pipeline nearly a decade ago may have damaged the pipeline and coating.

According to the report, weights are placed on the pipeline in areas "where water could potentially result in buoyancy concerns."

TransCanada spokesman Mark Cooper said the company has been working cooperatively with the federal agency and has begun "a safe, controlled and gradual startup" of the pipeline. Cooper says that process will continue over the next couple of days.

South Dakota officials don't believe the leak polluted any surface water bodies or drinking water systems. The company disclosed the buried pipeline leak on agricultural land in Marshall County on Nov. 16.

Jirek named new director at Fargo's Northern Crops Institute

FARGO, N.D. (AP) — Mark Jirek has been named director of the Northern Crops Institute at North Dakota State University.

Jirik has more than 17 years of experience in commodity merchandising and commercial management at Cargill. He holds a master's degree in agricultural economics from the University of Illinois and a bachelor's degree in agricultural economics from NDSU.

Northern Crops Institute supports regional producers by conducting educational and technical programs

to promote domestic and international markets. It is funded by the states of Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota, as well as commodity groups in those states and Montana.

Jirik replaces Mark Weber, who is retiring next month after serving as director for six years.

Man sentenced to 45 years for cutting off woman's nipples

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A judge has sentenced a South Dakota man to 45 years in prison for using scissors to mutilate his ex-girlfriend's breasts.

Forty-five-year-old Tony Ledbetter of Sioux Falls earlier pleaded guilty to three counts of aggravated assault. As part of a plea deal, prosecutors agreed to ask for no more than 30 years.

But the Argus Leader reports Judge Doug Hoffman went against the plea agreement Tuesday and gave Ledbetter the maximum 45 years.

Ledbetter was accused of sitting on the woman and slicing off her nipples with a pair of scissors during an argument last year. He apologized in court.

The victim told the court how her injuries affected her physically and emotionally. She addressed Ledbetter directly, saying, "Do you feel like a man?"

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

Authorities ID 2 men killed in collision near Belle Fourche

BELLE FOURCHE, S.D. (AP) — Authorities have released the names of two men killed in a head-on collision near Belle Fourche last week.

The South Dakota Highway Patrol says 52-year-old Dale Falk of Spearfish was driving a Dodge Caravan when he crossed the center line on U.S. Highway 212 and struck a Cadillac Seville driven by 63-year-old Kent Sukraw of Newell.

Both drivers died at the scene. They were the only people in either vehicle.

The crash happened Friday afternoon about three miles east of Belle Fourche.

South Dakota church hosts security training for area leaders

BOX ELDER, S.D. (AP) — A western South Dakota church is hosting security training following the mass shooting at a Texas church earlier this month.

The training will be held this week at the Outreach Community Church in Box Elder to identify how church buildings are vulnerable to acts of mass violence, the Rapid City Journal reported. Church leaders, staff and volunteers will learn to single out suspicious individuals, train security teams and secure a facility.

The church is working in coordination with the police department and Kansas-based training group, Strategos International, which has provided training to over 1,000 churches in the U.S.

The church had already been working with Strategos to improve security since last year. Although, interest in such training spiked after the shooting at a small church in Texas killed 25 people, including a pregnant woman.

"It brought to the forefront that we need to look at the security of the facility," said Ernie Nelson, the church's pastor. "You can't just take things for granted in the day we live in."

Organizers said seminar participants will discuss whether individuals with concealed-weapons licenses should be designated to attend church services while armed.

Outreach Community Church already has attendees who bring guns to its services, according to Nelson. "I'm not opposed to it," Nelson said. "Some people are."

Police Lt. Chris Misselt said that arming service-goers is a "component not all will opt for."

About 60 people have signed up for the training, including people from North Dakota. The seminar costs \$99 for one day or \$159 for both days. While designed for church members, Nelson said that everyone is encouraged to attend.

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

Woman charged in pregnant neighbor's death to change plea

FARGO, N.D. (AP) — A North Dakota woman accused of killing a pregnant neighbor so she and her boyfriend could keep the baby intends to change her not-guilty plea.

Brooke Crews, 38, filed a change-of-plea notice Monday in Cass County court. The notice doesn't say how Crews intends to change her plea. A hearing is scheduled for Dec. 11.

Crews and her boyfriend, 32-year-old William Hoehn, are each charged with conspiracy to commit murder and kidnapping in the death of 22-year-old Savanna Greywind, of Fargo.

Greywind, a member of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa, was eight months pregnant when she disappeared Aug. 19. Her body was found by kayakers in the Red River. It was wrapped in plastic and duct tape.

Investigators haven't said how Greywind was killed, but Fargo's police chief called it a "cruel and vicious act of depravity."

The baby girl, who survived, was found in Crews and Hoehn's apartment. Greywind's boyfriend, Ashton Matheny, said DNA tests confirmed that he and Greywind are the girl's parents. He now has custody, prosecutor Leah Viste said Tuesday.

Crews and Hoehn gave investigators differing accounts of what happened, according to the criminal complaint. Crews told police she arranged to have Greywind come to her apartment on Aug. 19 and told her how to induce labor, and that Greywind returned two days later to give her the newborn baby.

But Hoehn told investigators he came home Aug. 19 to find Crews cleaning up blood in their bathroom. He said Crews presented him with the infant girl and said: "This is our baby. This is our family," the complaint states.

Hoehn told police he took garbage bags containing bloody shoes and his bloody towels and disposed of them away from the apartment complex, according to the documents.

Crews and Hoehn remain jailed with bond set at \$2 million each.

Backers, foes of Keystone XL seek clarification in ruling

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — The developer of the Keystone XL pipeline and the project's opponents are asking Nebraska regulators to clarify their recent decision to approve an alternative pipeline route through the state.

Attorneys for pipeline developer TransCanada and landowners who want to stop it both filed motions for the Nebraska Public Service Commission to reconsider its decision.

The commission approved a pathway but didn't pick TransCanada's preferred route, which has undergone numerous local, state and federal reviews.

A TransCanada spokesman says the company filed its motion in hopes that commissioners will answer lingering questions about the decision. The company intends to file an amended application with the commission.

An attorney for the landowners is asking the commission to make clear that commissioners expressly denied TransCanada's preferred route for the project.

Former lobbyist accused ex-lawmaker of sexual harassment

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A former South Dakota lobbyist is trying to block an ex-legislator from receiving a new state appointment, alleging he made sexually inappropriate comments to her in 2012.

Tiffany Campbell, a former American Civil Liberties Union lobbyist, emailed every South Dakota senator this month urging them to block the appointment of Gene Abdallah to the state Board of Pardons and Paroles. Abdallah has forcefully denied the allegation.

Campbell told the Argus Leader that she was discussing legislation with Abdallah at a bar frequented by lobbyists and lawmakers when he asked to go to restroom with her to watch her.

Abdallah, who was a Republican representing Sioux Falls' District 10 at the time, said he never met Campbell. Abdallah accused Campbell of using "sleazy and gutter politics" for personal gain, saying she

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could "go to hell."

Campbell said she knew coming forward about the incident would likely bring negative attention for her. "Why would anyone want to do this? Why would anyone want to be publicly known as that person?" Campbell said. "To think that he's going to be appointed to the parole board, I just couldn't stay quiet anymore."

Campbell said she reported the incident in 2012 to the state House speaker but was told it couldn't be investigated because it happened outside the Capitol. Campbell said she had to "tread lightly" because she had three pieces of legislation that session, so she didn't take her concern any further.

Then-House Speaker Val Rausch said he recalls talking with Campbell that year but couldn't remember details of the discussion.

"I know Tiffany, and I recall she came into my office, but I couldn't tell you what we talked about," he said. "I don't remember any reports to me of any sexual harassment."

A few lawmakers said in email replies shared with the newspaper that they would oppose Abdallah's appointment to the parole board, which must be confirmed by the Senate.

Attorney General Marty Jackley said he's sticking by Abdallah's appointment.

"If Senator Abdallah made such a comment, it would be inappropriate," Jackley said. "However, Senator Abdallah has denied making the comment."

This story has been corrected to show that the ex-lawmaker's last name is Abdallah, not Abadallah.

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

Bootlegging operation found on Pine Ridge reservation

PINE RIDGE, S.D. (AP) — Oglala Sioux tribal police say they've uncovered a liquor bootlegging operation on the reservation.

Police recently conducted warrant sweeps with the U.S. Marshal Service Black Hills Fugitive Task Force and discovered the operation. KOTA-TV reports tribal officials say operators were mixing vodka with rubbing alcohol and selling the mixture in water bottles for \$10 each.

Authorities say 15 bottles were found at an undisclosed Pine Ridge Reservation home. A warrant has been requested for bootlegging charges.

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

10 Things to Know for Today

By The Associated Press

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

1. 'FIRE WITH COURAGE FOR THE PARTY AND COUNTRY!'

North Korea's state media say leader Kim Jong Un ordered his engineers to launch a new intercontinental ballistic missile, a flight test where it demonstrated its reach deep into the U.S. mainland.

2. NBC NEWS FIRES MATT LAUER

The longtime "Today" show host was terminated for "inappropriate sexual behavior in the workplace" and NBC News chairman Andy Lack says the network does not believe it was an isolated incident.

3. FACING TAX VOTE IN SENATE, TRUMP SEIZES ON CULTURAL FIGHTS

Ahead of a big tax vote, Trump brings attention to Pocahontas, NFL players who kneel during the national anthem, his disputes with the news media and Democrats who are "weak on crime."

4. WHAT POPE IS URGING IN MYANMAR

During a Mass in the predominantly Buddhist nation, the pontiff implores their long-suffering people to resist the temptation to exact revenge for the hurt they've endured.

5. BALI AIRPORT REOPENS, BUT VOLCANO STILL SPEWING ASH

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Indonesia's president says the danger has not passed and urged anyone within mountain's exclusion zone on the resort island to get out "for the sake of their safety."

6. HOUSE TO VOTE ON MANDATORY SEXUAL HARASSMENT TRAINING

The vote comes amid a wave of accusations against lawmakers that has thrust the issue of gender hostility and discrimination onto Capitol Hill.

7. HOW IRAN IS CHALLENGING A TABOO

In a poor east Tehran neighborhood known for its drug addicts and dealers, a charity group is taking blood samples to test for the virus that causes AIDS.

8. 24-YEAR-OLD MAN ARRESTED IN TAMPA SERIAL KILLINGS

Police will charge Howell Emanuel Donaldson with four counts of first degree murder for a string of killings that have terrorized the neighborhood of Seminole Heights.

9. BLACK, LATINO ACTS RULE GRAMMY NOMINATIONS

Jay-Z and Bruno Mars dominate in the top categories, giving those who perform rap, R&B and Latin music a strong chance at taking home the biggest awards.

10. GIANTS STUN BY BENCHING ELI MANNING

The two-time MVP of the Super Bowl will see his consecutive games streak end after 13 seasons and 210 games.

NBC News fires Matt Lauer over inappropriate sexual behavior

NEW YORK (AP) — NBC News says longtime "Today" show host Matt Lauer has been fired for "inappropriate sexual behavior."

Lauer's co-host Savannah Guthrie made the announcement at the top of Wednesday's "Today" show.

Guthrie read a statement from NBC News chairman Andy Lack, stating that the company has received a detailed complaint from a colleague Monday night "about inappropriate sexual behavior in the workplace" by Lauer. Lack's statement said the company found that after a serious review of the complaint it represented "a clear violation" of the company's standards, and Lauer was terminated as a result.

Lack added in his statement that it was the first complaint about Lauer in more than 20 years at NBC, but "we were also presented with reason to believe this may not have been an isolated incident."

The move comes a week after CBS News fired morning anchor Charlie Rose amid reports of sexual misconduct.

Trump retweets videos critical of Muslims

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump is retweeting a series of anti-Muslim videos posted by a far-right British politician.

Trump sent the Twitter messages Wednesday morning. The videos were first posted by Jayda Fransen, the deputy leader of the far-right group Britain First.

The descriptions read: "VIDEO: Islamist mob pushes teenage boy off roof and beats him to death!" and "VIDEO: Muslim Destroys a Statue of Virgin Mary!" and "VIDEO: Muslim migrant beats up Dutch boy on crutches!"

After Trump retweeted the videos, Fransen quickly responded on Twitter, saying: "DONALD TRUMP HIMSELF HAS RETWEETED THESE VIDEOS AND HAS AROUND 44 MILLION FOLLOWERS! GOD BLESS YOU TRUMP! GOD BLESS AMERICA!"

Trump has sought to ban immigrants from certain Muslim-majority nations.

What's new, and what's ahead, after North Korea's ICBM test

By ERIC TALMADGE, Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — Experts may debate trajectories, payload weights and re-entry shields, but North Korea's claim that the entire United States is within range of its rapidly improving missiles just got a lot more credible.

Wednesday's launch of what the North called the Hwasong-15 intercontinental ballistic missile demonstrated a greater range than other missiles it's tested and showcased several capabilities the North must master if it were ever to actually try to unleash them at the United States.

Here is a quick look at the advancements made, the developments still to come, and the implications for the United States and its Asian allies:

THE MISSILE ITSELF

According to North Korea's announcements about the launch, the Hwasong-15 can be tipped with a "super-large heavy warhead" and is capable of striking anywhere in the U.S. mainland. The North claims it reached an altitude of 4,475 kilometers (2,780 miles) and flew 950 kilometers (600 miles) from its launch site just outside of Pyongyang. It was airborne for 53 minutes before splashing down in the Sea of Japan.

The launch data jibe with what foreign experts observed. U.S. scientist David Wright, a physicist who closely tracks North Korea's missile and nuclear programs, estimates the Hwasong-15 has an estimated range of more than 13,000 kilometers (8,100 miles) if flown on a standard trajectory — putting it within reach of Washington, D.C.

Pyongyang claims the missile has significant tactical and technical improvements from the Hwasong-14 ICBM it tested in July and is the North's "most powerful" to date. KCNA also said Kim Jong Un "declared with pride that now we have finally realized the great historic cause of completing the state nuclear force."

The repeated claim in the announcement that North Korea has now completed its "rocket weaponry system development" is new and important. It could be bluster, but might also suggest a shift away from tests — at least of these kinds of missiles — toward production and deployment.

The North's arsenal is still a far cry from the quality and quantity of what the United States can field. The Air Force's development of the Minuteman ICBM goes back to the late 1950s. It now has about 400 of the latest version, the Minuteman III, which also has a maximum range of about 13,000 kilometers.

HOW IT WAS LAUNCHED

The timing and location are important. It was launched in the dead of night, most likely from a mobile launcher, near the capital. That indicates the North was trying to show it can launch whenever and wherever it pleases — a capability makes it more difficult to take pre-emptive action. It's impossible to blow up a North Korean missile on the launch pad if the missile can be moved and there isn't any launch pad at all.

Interestingly, however, Japanese media reported on Tuesday their government had intercepted radio signals from the North suggesting a launch was imminent. It's not clear if that was a first, since details on such intelligence are normally not made public. But it does suggest the North's neighbors are having some success with surveillance efforts.

The trajectory of the launch is also significant. The missile was "lofted" at an extremely sharp angle and reached an altitude more than twice as high as satellites in low Earth orbit.

North Korea needs to launch toward the Pacific because it would otherwise be shooting its missiles at Russia or China — a very unwise proposition. And lofting avoids flying over Japan, which could prompt Tokyo or Japan-based U.S. missile-defense facilities to attempt an intercept, and hits open seas instead of other nations.

But lofting doesn't closely simulate conditions of a real launch. Experts can roughly gauge the range of the missile from its lofted performance, but a missile on an attack trajectory would fly a lower, flatter pattern that presents some different challenges, particularly in the crucial re-entry stage of the nuclear payload.

SO WHAT NOW?

North Korea claimed as it always does that the test is part of its overall strategy to defend itself against Washington's "nuclear blackmail" and that its development of missiles and nuclear weapons does not pose a threat to any country "as long as the interests of the DPRK are not infringed upon." DPRK is short for North Korea's official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

In an equally familiar manner, the move was immediately condemned in the strongest terms by Tokyo and Seoul. President Donald Trump said Washington "will handle it," while giving no indication of how or what handling it actually would mean.

Clearly, however, the problem isn't going away.

The launch broke a two-month lull in what has been a record pace of tests for the North. While some claimed that was the result of pressure from the United States and its allies, it's common for the North to re-focus its energies to farming activities during the harvest season and for its military to shift into a lower-profile mode for its winter training cycle.

North Korea still needs to conduct further missile tests, particularly of its submarine-launched missile systems, to improve its overall arsenal. But having now demonstrated what it claims to be the primary missile it needs to deter attack from the United States, Pyongyang may turn to more testing of its nuclear weapons.

So far, five of its six nuclear tests have been conducted in a series of tunnels under Mount Mantap, a 2,205 meter (7,200 foot) tall granite peak in the northeast part of the country. But Pyongyang has hinted it might attempt an atmospheric test over the Pacific Ocean.

That would be a far more provocative move than Wednesday's missile test and might prompt a military response.

Talmadge has been the AP's Pyongyang bureau chief since 2013. Follow him on Twitter and Instagram at EricTalmadge.

Bali airport reopens, but volcano still spewing ash

By **STEPHEN WRIGHT, Associated Press**

KARANGASEM, Indonesia (AP) — The airport on the Indonesian resort island of Bali reopened Wednesday after an erupting volcano forced its closure two days ago, but the country's president said the danger had not passed and urged anyone within the mountain's exclusion zone to get out "for the sake of their safety."

Volcanic ash reaching 25,000 feet (7,600 meters) in the air began drifting south and southeast of Mount Agung, leaving clean space above the airport for planes to land and take off, said airport spokesman Arie Ahsannurohim.

The airport, which handles more than 400 flights a day, had closed Monday, disrupting travel for tens of thousands of people trying to enter or leave the popular vacation destination. Thick ash particles are hazardous to aircraft and can choke engines.

Despite the all-clear from authorities, flights are unlikely to rapidly return to normal levels and a change in the direction of the ash or a new more powerful eruption could force the airport's closure again.

President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo ordered all concerned ministries and agencies, as well as the military and police, to help Bali's government deal with the disaster.

"I hope there will be no victims hit by the eruption," he said.

Authorities have told 100,000 people to leave an area extending up to 10 kilometers (6 miles) in places from the volcano as it belches gray and white plumes. Nearly 40,000 people are now staying in 225 shelters, according to the Disaster Mitigation Agency in Karangasem. But tens of thousands more have remained in their homes because they feel safe or don't want to abandon their land and livestock.

In the village of Tulamben inside the exclusion zone, farmers were plowing their fields with cattle Wednesday, seemingly unbothered by the smoking mountain behind them swelling with orange lava.

In Sukadana village, about 8 kilometers from the crater, a few remaining residents said mudflows of volcanic debris and water had passed through the area for a couple of days before solidifying.

Some stranded tourists managed to get off the island before the airport reopened, but they faced an arduous journey involving crowded roads, buses, ferries and sometimes overnight waits in yet another airport in Surabaya on the island of Java.

"This is a very unforgettable experience for us. So much hassle and definitely one for the books," said Sheryl David, a tourist from Manila, Philippines, who arrived Saturday in Bali with three friends and was supposed to leave Tuesday. She remained stuck in a third airport on Wednesday in the capital, Jakarta, waiting for a flight home that required buying a new ticket, but said the experience didn't dampen her feelings about the island.

"Yes, still a paradise," she texted.

The volcano's last major eruption, in 1963, killed about 1,100 people, but it is unclear how bad the current situation might get or how long it could last. A worst-case scenario would involve an explosive eruption that causes the mountain's cone to collapse.

"An analogy would be the twin towers collapsing in New York on 9/11," said Richard Arculus, a volcano expert at Australian National University. "You saw people running away from the debris raining down and columns of dust pursuing people down the street. You will not be able to outrun this thing."

Indonesian officials first raised the highest alert two months ago when seismic activity increased at the mountain. The activity decreased by late October, and the alert was lowered before being lifted to the highest level again Monday.

Indonesia sits on the Pacific "Ring of Fire" and has more than 120 active volcanoes.

Associated Press journalists Ali Kotarumalos and Margie Mason in Jakarta, Indonesia, and Kiko Rosario in Bangkok contributed to this report.

Facing tax vote in Senate, Trump seizes on cultural fights

By KEN THOMAS, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump sized up his coming week on Sunday and tweeted that it was a "big week for Tax Cuts and many other things of great importance to our Country."

But over the next 48 hours he dished out tweets and quips that instead put the spotlight on an assortment of other matters — Pocahontas, NFL players who kneel during the national anthem, his disputes with the news media and Democrats who are "weak on crime."

The tangents diverted attention from Trump's agenda at a time of maximum consequence for his tax proposal and with a crush of December deadlines looming. And they offered fresh evidence of the president's tendency to latch on to particular cultural touchstones and refuse to let them go.

The president has been mocking Democratic Sen. Elizabeth Warren as "Pocahontas" since last year's presidential campaign and he reignited the feud with a passing comment during a White House ceremony on Monday honoring Native Americans.

He's been fanning the NFL-anthem issue throughout the fall football season. And he continues to bash political opponents like Democratic congressional leaders Chuck Schumer and Nancy Pelosi as tax-hiking pushovers who are unwilling to bolster law enforcement, the military or the nation's borders.

Hours before a scheduled White House meeting with the two Democrats and Republican congressional leaders, Trump slammed Schumer and Pelosi on immigration, crime and taxes, adding, "I don't see a deal!" The two Democrats abruptly pulled out of the meeting, prompting Trump to leave empty seats for them on either side of him in the Roosevelt Room alongside Senate GOP leader Mitch McConnell and House Speaker Paul Ryan.

Trump's broadsides may seem random but they serve the president well on another front, by energizing his core supporters with darts that are sure to delight.

Even as the White House is searching for the votes to push a major tax package through the Senate, the president and his allies are itching for a fight with Warren, a potential 2020 Democratic presidential

candidate and vocal Trump critic.

Trump has long mocked Warren's claims about being part Native American, which first surfaced during her 2012 Senate race against Republican Sen. Scott Brown in Massachusetts. Even in a country that has grown more diverse with each passing decade, the president has brushed aside criticism that the term is a racial slur.

Warren said following a protest outside the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau on Tuesday that Trump "seems to think that that's somehow going to shut me up," and prevent her from "talking about the tax bill that would favor giant corporations instead of working families."

"He's wrong. It's not going to make any difference," Warren said.

But Trump's allies welcome the comparisons to Warren, a liberal icon in a party grappling with a leadership vacuum and still searching for the best way to counter the president.

"It's about her not telling the truth and the extent to which she wants to engage in a debate on this, please keep going," said former Trump campaign aide Barry Bennett.

"The more the conversation is him vs. her or the progressive Bernie Sanders wing of the party, it makes him look even better, because frankly there are a lot of Americans in between the coasts who are scared to death of progressive values," Bennett said.

Trump's focus on his Republican base has been magnified in his fresh dispute with Schumer and Pelosi. Long gone are the days when the president mused about cutting deals with his Democratic counterparts "Chuck and Nancy."

His tweet about them on Tuesday helped allay concerns among some Republicans that he might use the meeting to negotiate with Democrats — without significant GOP input — on a budget deal or to protect immigrants who were brought to the U.S. illegally as children and whose protected status is set to lapse next year.

Trump's allies dismiss the notion that the president's focus on side issues is an unwelcome distraction during a week in which the administration hopes to clear a big hurdle on taxes and give the president a major legislative achievement before the 2018 midterm elections after frustrating setbacks on health care. The president was making the case for the tax cuts during a speech Wednesday in St. Charles, Missouri.

"There's no option for failure here. If they don't hang together, they're going to hang separately in 2018," said Stephen Moore, a fellow at the conservative-oriented Heritage Foundation who advised the Trump campaign. "There's no room for failure here. They have to deliver."

On Twitter follow Ken Thomas at @KThomasDC.

House to vote on mandatory sexual harassment training

By JULIET LINDERMAN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Rocked by allegations of sexual misconduct, the House is moving ahead on legislation to require anti-sexual harassment training for all members and their staffs.

The vote comes amid a wave of accusations against lawmakers that has thrust the issue of gender hostility and discrimination on Capitol Hill squarely into the spotlight, and prompted calls for the embattled lawmakers to step down.

The measure would require lawmakers, their staffs and interns "to complete a program of training in workplace rights and responsibilities each session of each Congress" that includes anti-discrimination and anti-harassment training.

The Senate unanimously adopted a similar measure earlier this month. That vote came as titans of media, entertainment and sports faced swift punishment after allegations of inappropriate sexual behavior.

Since then, Rep. John Conyers, D-Mich., the longest serving member of the House, is under fire after a news website published a report detailing a settlement with a staffer who said Conyers sexually harassed her, then fired her after she rebuffed his advances. A second former staffer has come forward with more claims of inappropriate behavior.

Conyers earlier this week announced that he's stepping down from his leadership position on the House Judiciary Committee. Two Democratic lawmakers, Rep. Kathleen Rice of New York and Rep. Pramila Jayapal of Washington state have called on Conyers to resign. The Ethics Committee has opened an investigation.

Meanwhile, Rep. Joe Barton, R-Texas, recently apologized after a nude photo of him was leaked on social media.

Two weeks ago, a woman came forward to accuse Sen. Al Franken, D-Minn., of forcibly kissing her during a USO tour in the Middle East in 2006, before he was elected to public office. Leeann Tweeden also released a photograph in which Franken appears to be groping her breasts while she sleeps. Two other women have since accused Franken of fondling their buttocks while posing for photographs.

Franken has apologized and said he welcomes a Senate Ethics investigation.

Rep. Barbara Comstock, R-Va., one of the resolution's sponsors, earlier this month told a story at a House hearing about a staffer who left Capitol Hill after a current member of Congress exposed himself to her. Comstock said she does not know the identity of the lawmaker.

Rep. Jackie Speier, D-Calif., another co-sponsor, revealed at the same hearing that two current members, one Democrat and one Republican, have also engaged in sexual harassment. Speier declined to name the members, citing non-disclosure agreements as well as the wishes of the victims not to identify their harassers.

Next week, that committee will hold another hearing to review the Congressional Accountability Act, and propose reforms to the way in which harassment complaints are filed and handled on Capitol Hill.

The vote comes as Alabama GOP candidate Roy Moore faces allegations of preying on teenage girls decades ago. Senate Republicans, led by Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., have called on Moore to step aside, saying they believe the women. President Donald Trump has all but endorsed Moore, who denies the allegations.

Skeptical Democrats to quiz Trump health pick on drug prices

By RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR and LAURIE KELLMAN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Skeptical Democratic senators are getting a chance to question President Donald Trump's pick for health secretary about what he'll do about rising drug prices and the future of "Obamacare."

Alex Azar's first confirmation hearing — before the Senate Health Education, Labor and Pensions Committee — was scheduled for Wednesday. The former drug company and government executive has the support of committee Republicans. He's signaling that he wants to shift away from partisanship, and some prominent Democrats seem to be willing to give him a chance.

"While there may be disagreements on policy, I do think he's willing to hear people out," said former Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle, a Democrat who met with Azar recently and has known him for years.

"He's the best choice we have, given the current political situation," said Kavita Patel, a health care expert with the Brookings Institution, who worked in former President Barack Obama's administration and, before that, for the late Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, D-Mass.

All sides agree that Azar, 50, is headed for Senate confirmation, which would be his third after appointments to senior positions at the Department of Health and Human Services in the George W. Bush administration.

Nevertheless, he faces tough questioning, given the Senate's hyper-partisan atmosphere, which has sunk or battered other nominees.

Sen. Patty Murray of Washington, the health panel's ranking Democrat has tweeted her intent to ask Azar if he would be a toady for Trump's "extreme, politically driven & harmful agenda." Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., said she has "concerns" about whether Azar can deliver "better health care and lower drug prices."

In prepared remarks released Tuesday night, Azar said "drug prices are too high," placing the issue as his top priority. He shied away from detailed proposals, however, saying instead that he has the knowledge and experience to get drug companies, pharmacies, insurers and government programs to work toward

solutions.

The Senate Finance Committee will hold another hearing on Azar soon and formally decide whether to send the nomination to the full Senate.

If confirmed, Azar would be Trump's second HHS secretary, replacing Tom Price, who resigned under pressure after using private charter flights at taxpayer expense.

Azar's career path could prove a challenge given Trump's vow to "drain the swamp" of Washington.

He'll face questions about whether his lucrative, decade-long stint as an executive with Indianapolis-based Eli Lilly and Co. will conflict with his work to lower drug prices. On Azar's watch, patient advocacy groups criticized Lilly for price increases to one of its biggest products: insulin.

In speeches while at the company, Azar questioned whether the government's regulatory machinery has kept up with the pace of scientific change, and he warned that price controls could stifle innovation — standard industry arguments.

"Will he carry pharma's water? I don't think so, based on my interactions with him," said former Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, a Republican from Tennessee. Like Daschle, he is active in the Bipartisan Policy Center, a Washington think tank.

Before resigning from Eli Lilly earlier this year, Azar built a financial portfolio now worth \$9.5 million to \$20.6 million, according to disclosure records filed with the Office of Government Ethics. He also was paid nearly \$2 million in his final year at the company, received a \$1.6 million severance and sold off more than \$3.4 million in Lilly stock. He also declared \$100,000 to \$1 million in capital gains from the sales, along with millions more in stock and bond holdings.

Azar is an Ivy League-educated lawyer with conservative credentials. Early on he built connections in Republican circles — he clerked for Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia, worked under Kenneth Starr during the Whitewater probe of President Bill Clinton's land deals and raised campaign cash for GOP presidential candidates Mitt Romney and Jeb Bush.

His previous posts at HHS allowed him to build relationships with Democrats, too. Daschle said he worked most closely with Azar in 2001, when Daschle was a South Dakota senator and anthrax was found in his office. Azar was then the HHS general counsel. Four years later, he was confirmed as deputy secretary of the agency.

Dan Mendelson, president of the consulting firm Avalere Health and a Clinton administration veteran, said Azar's credibility comes from an understanding of federal programs and HHS divisions like Medicare, Medicaid and the Food and Drug Administration.

"He has policy wonk credentials," said Mendelson, a Democrat who has known Azar for about 20 years and considers him a friend. "I can't think of a better person to tackle the opioids crisis, for example, because he understands all the different levers."

Associated Press writers Tom Murphy and Brian Slodysko in Indianapolis and Stephen Braun in Washington contributed to this report.

24-year-old man arrested in Tampa serial killings

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) — Police arrested a man late Tuesday and said they will charge him with murder in a string of killings that have terrorized a neighborhood of Tampa.

Tampa Police Chief Brian Dugan announced at a news conference that Howell Emanuel Donaldson, 24, would be charged with four counts of first degree murder.

Police detained Donaldson earlier Tuesday after a tip that he had a gun at a McDonald's restaurant.

Residents and police had been on edge since Oct. 9, when 22-year-old Benjamin Mitchell was shot to death. Two days later, 32-year-old Monica Hoffa, was slain. And on Oct. 19, Anthony Naiboa, 20, was killed after taking the wrong bus home from his new job. On Nov. 14, 60-year-old Ronald Felton was killed.

All of the October victims were either getting on or off a city bus, or were at a bus stop when they were shot, police said.

Dugan said the department had received more than 5,000 tips. He thanked those who called in the tip that led to Donaldson's arrest. No further information was provided about Donaldson.

Prospects brighter for tax overhaul, success not assured

By ALAN FRAM and ANDREW TAYLOR, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Prospects are suddenly looking brighter for the Republican tax overhaul. But the chances of avoiding a government shutdown? Not so much.

Republicans on Tuesday held together and shoved their signature tax overhaul a crucial step ahead as wavering GOP senators showed a growing openness. But its fate remained uncertain, and a planned White House summit aimed at averting a government shutdown was derailed when President Donald Trump savaged top Democrats and declared on Twitter, "I don't see a deal!"

"It's time to stop tweeting and start leading," Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer retorted after he and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi rebuffed the budget meeting with Trump and top Republicans.

Trump lunched with GOP senators at the Capitol and declared it a "love fest," as he had at his previous closed-doors visit. But the day underscored the party's yearlong problem of unifying behind key legislation — even a bill slashing corporate taxes and cutting personal taxes that's a paramount party goal.

Tuesday's developments also emphasized the leverage Democrats have as Congress faces a deadline a week from Friday for passing legislation to keep federal agencies open while leaders seek a longer-term budget deal. Republicans lack the votes to pass the short-term legislation without Democratic support.

In a party-line 12-11 vote, the Senate Budget Committee managed to advance the tax measure to the full Senate as a pair of wavering Republicans — Wisconsin's Ron Johnson and Tennessee's Bob Corker — fell into line, at least for the moment. In more good news for the GOP, moderate Sen. Susan Collins of Maine said it was a "fair assumption" that she was likelier to support the bill after saying Trump agreed to make property taxes up to \$10,000 deductible instead of eliminating that break entirely.

But the fate of the legislation remained uncertain as it headed toward debate by the full Senate, which Republicans control by a slender 52-48. GOP leaders can afford just two defectors, and a half dozen or more in their party have been uncommitted. They include some wanting bigger tax breaks for many businesses but others cringing over the \$1.4 trillion — or more — that the measure is projected to add to budget deficits over the next decade.

"It's a challenging exercise," conceded Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky. He compared it to "sitting there with a Rubik's Cube and trying to get to 50" votes, a tie that Vice President Mike Pence would break.

Corker, who's all but broken with Trump over the president's behavior in office, is among a handful of Republicans uneasy over the mountains of red ink the tax measure is expected to produce. He said he was encouraged by discussions with the White House and party leaders to include a mechanism — details still unknown — to automatically trigger tax increases if specified, annual economic growth targets aren't met.

"I think we're getting to a very good place on the deficit issue," Corker said.

But other Republicans are wary of backing legislation that would hold the hammer of potential future tax increases over voters' heads.

"I am not going to vote to automatically implement tax increases on the American people. If I do that, consider me drunk," said Sen. John Kennedy of Louisiana.

Collins said she'd also won agreement that before completing the tax measure, Congress would approve legislation restoring federal payments to health insurers that Trump scuttled last month. That bill has had bipartisan support, but it's unclear if Democrats would back it amid partisan battling over the tax bill.

McConnell and House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., met with Trump at the White House despite the top Democrats' no-shows. Trump highlighted their absence by appearing before reporters flanked by two empty chairs bearing Schumer's and Pelosi's names.

Trump said Democrats would be to blame for any shutdown, despite GOP domination of government.

"If it happens it's going to be over illegals pouring into the country, crime pouring into the country, no

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border wall, which everyone wants," he said. He also said North Korea's launch of a ballistic missile on Wednesday should prompt Democrats to renew negotiations over the spending legislation, which includes Pentagon funding.

"But probably they won't because nothing to them is important other than raising taxes," Trump said.

Democrats noted that in May, Trump tweeted the country "needs a good 'shutdown' in September to fix mess!" In a tweet of her own Tuesday, Pelosi said Trump's "verbal abuse will no longer be tolerated," adding in reference to the empty-chairs show, "Poor Ryan and McConnell relegated to props. Sad!"

A temporary spending bill expires Dec. 8 and another is needed to prevent a government shutdown. Hurricane aid to help Texas, Florida, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands is also expected to be included in that measure, as well as renewed financing for a children's health program that serves more than 8 million low-income children.

Democrats are also pressing for legislative protections for immigrants known as "Dreamers." Conservative Republicans object to including that issue in the crush of year-end business. But GOP Rep. Carlos Curbelo of Florida joined Democrats in saying he won't vote for the spending bill unless the immigrant issue is resolved.

AP reporters Matthew Daly, Kevin Freking and Stephen Ohlemacher contributed.

Bannon to campaign for embattled Moore in Alabama

By THOMAS BEAUMONT, Associated Press

Former White House strategist Steve Bannon told CNN Tuesday he is going to campaign for Alabama Senate candidate Roy Moore at a rally in the state next week, making a strong show of support for the embattled Republican a week before the special election.

The announcement came hours after The Associated Press reported that Bannon, who had not campaigned for Moore since days before the Sept. 26 Republican runoff, had no plans to campaign for Moore.

Two Bannon associates had told The Associated Press that Bannon was not planning to return to Alabama before the Dec. 12 election. The associates spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the matter.

But Bannon told CNN later, "I look forward to standing with Judge Moore and all of the Alabama 'deplorables' in the fight to elect him to the United States Senate and send shockwaves to the political and media elites."

Bannon uses "deplorables" as a term of endearment for supporters of President Donald Trump. During the 2016 campaign, Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton once described some of Trump's supporters as "a basket of deplorables."

A person close to Bannon confirmed to The Associated Press the former Trump strategist's plan to campaign for Moore. That person insisted on anonymity because the person was not authorized to discuss the matter publicly.

Moore's campaign is the opening battle in what Bannon has described as his war on the Republican establishment.

Bannon has been absent from Alabama since the primary, though he had dispatched a team of reporters with the conservative news network he runs, Breitbart News.

Bannon's decision to visit comes on the heels of the White House announcement Monday that Trump does not plan to campaign for Moore, a former state Supreme Court judge who appeared headed to easy victory until decades-old allegations he preyed on teenage girls as a man in his 30s emerged.

Bannon said shortly after the first allegations came to light two weeks ago, "Until I see additional evidence on Judge Moore, I'm standing with him."

That was before a chorus of calls from Republicans in Congress and around the country — most notably Republican Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell — calling on Moore to step down.

N. Korea fires ICBM it says is 'significantly more' powerful

By KIM TONG-HYUNG and FOSTER KLUG, Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — After 2 ½ months of relative quiet, North Korea launched its most powerful weapon yet early Wednesday, claiming a new type of intercontinental ballistic missile that some observers believe could reach Washington and the entire eastern U.S. seaboard.

In a special state media broadcast hours later, North Korea said it successfully fired a "significantly more" powerful, nuclear-capable ICBM it called the Hwasong-15. Outside governments and analysts concurred the North had made a jump in missile capability.

A resumption of Pyongyang's torrid testing pace in pursuit of its goal of a viable arsenal of nuclear-tipped missiles that can hit the U.S. mainland had been widely expected, but the power of the missile and suddenness of the test still jolted the Korean Peninsula and Washington. The launch at 3:17 a.m. local time and midday in the U.S. capital indicated an effort to perfect the element of surprise and to obtain maximum attention in the United States.

In a government statement released through state media, North Korea said the Hwasong-15, the "greatest ICBM," could be armed with a "super-large heavy nuclear warhead" and is capable of striking the "whole mainland" of the United States. The North said the missile reached a height of 4,475 kilometers (2,780 miles) and traveled 950 kilometers (590 miles) before accurately hitting a sea target, similar to the flight data announced by South Korea's military.

It said leader Kim Jong Un after the successful launch "declared with pride" that the country has achieved its goal of becoming a "rocket power." State TV said Kim gave the order on Tuesday and broadcast a photo of Kim's signed order where he wrote: "Test launch is approved. Taking place at the daybreak of Nov. 29! Fire with courage for the party and country!"

The firing is a clear message of defiance aimed at the Trump administration, which a week earlier had restored North Korea to a U.S. list of terror sponsors. It also ruins nascent diplomatic efforts, raises fears of war or a pre-emptive U.S. strike and casts a deeper shadow over the security of the Winter Olympics early next year in South Korea.

A rattled Seoul responded by almost immediately launching three of its own missiles in a show of force. President Moon Jae-in expressed worry North Korea's missile threat could force the United States to attack the North before it masters a nuclear-tipped long-range missile, something experts say may be imminent.

"If North Korea completes a ballistic missile that could reach from one continent to another, the situation can spiral out of control," Moon said at an emergency meeting in Seoul, according to his office. "We must stop a situation where North Korea miscalculates and threatens us with nuclear weapons or where the United States considers a pre-emptive strike."

Moon has repeatedly declared the U.S. cannot attack the North without Seoul's approval, but many here worry Washington may act without South Korean input.

The launch was North Korea's first since it fired an intermediate-range missile over Japan on Sept. 15 and may have broken any efforts at diplomacy. U.S. officials have sporadically floated the idea of direct talks with North Korea if it maintained restraint.

The missile also appears to improve on North Korea's past launches.

If flown on a standard trajectory, instead of Wednesday's lofted angle, the missile would have a range of more than 13,000 kilometers (8,100 miles), said U.S. scientist David Wright, a physicist who closely tracks North Korea's missile and nuclear programs. "Such a missile would have more than enough range to reach Washington, D.C., and in fact any part of the continental United States," Wright wrote in a blog post for the Union for Concerned Scientists.

North Korea's description of a "super-large heavy" warhead could raise debate on whether it plans another nuclear test to demonstrate it has such a weapon. When the North flight-tested two of its older ICBM models, the Hwasong-14s, in July, it said the missiles were capable of delivering "large-sized heavy" warheads. The North went on to conduct its sixth and most powerful nuclear test on Sept. 3, which it described as a detonation of a weapon built for ICBMs.

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South Korea's National Intelligence Service told lawmakers in a closed-door briefing the possibility of a nuclear test "cannot be discounted," lawmaker Kim Byung-kee said.

The missile was launched from near Pyongyang, and Japanese Defense Minister Itsunori Onodera said it landed inside of Japan's special economic zone in the Sea of Japan, about 250 kilometers (155 miles) west of Aomori, which is on the northern part of Japan's main island of Honshu.

A big unknown, however, is the missile's payload. If, as expected, it carried a light mock warhead, then its effective range would have been shorter, analysts said.

The analyses of Wednesday's test suggest progress by Pyongyang in developing a weapon of mass destruction that could strike the U.S. mainland. President Donald Trump has vowed to prevent North Korea from having that capability — using military force if necessary.

Kim Dong-yub, a former South Korean military official who is now an analyst at Seoul's Institute for Far Eastern Studies, said the missile is likely an upgraded version of its old ICBM with an enhanced second-stage. He believes the North will try to evaluate the weapon's performance, including the warhead's ability to survive atmospheric re-entry and strike the intended target, before it attempts a test that shows the full range of the missile.

In response to the launch, Trump said the United States will "take care of it." He told reporters after the launch: "It is a situation that we will handle." He did not elaborate.

The U.N. Security Council scheduled an emergency meeting for Wednesday afternoon at the request of Japan, the U.S. and South Korea.

When the Trump administration declared North Korea a state sponsor of terrorism, the U.S. also imposed new sanctions on North Korean shipping firms and Chinese trading companies dealing with the North. North Korea called the terror designation a "serious provocation" that justifies its development of nuclear weapons.

South Koreans are famously nonchalant about North Korea's military moves, but there is worry about what the North's weapons tests might mean for next year's Winter Olympics in the South. Moon ordered a close review of whether the launch could hurt South Korea's efforts to successfully host the games in Pyeongchang, which begin Feb. 9.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who spoke with Trump, said Japan will not back down against any provocation and would maximize pressure on the North in its strong alliance with the U.S.

Associated Press writers Matthew Pennington, Lolita C. Baldor and Robert Burns in Washington, Mari Yamaguchi in Tokyo and Edith M. Lederer at the United Nations contributed to this report.

Growing pressure on Conyers to resign after new accusations

By COREY WILLIAMS, Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — Pressure grew from fellow Democrats for Michigan Rep. John Conyers to resign after a former staffer said the longest-serving member of the House made unwanted sexual advances that included partially undressing in front of her in a hotel room and inappropriate touching.

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi pressured the 88-year-old Conyers behind the scenes to leave the chamber, said a senior House aide, who spoke late Tuesday on condition of anonymity to discuss private conversations.

Earlier in the day, members of the Congressional Black Caucus met with Conyers and explained to one of their founding members why he should resign, but stressed the decision was up to him, the senior House aide said.

The caucus chairman, Rep. Cedric Richmond, called the meeting a "candid conversation about the seriousness of the allegations against him."

Another caucus member, Rep. Bennie Thompson, said Conyers should, "go home and talk to his constituents and listen to them and make a decision based on that."

Conyers missed two roll call votes in the House late Tuesday and was photographed by a passenger

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boarding a flight to Detroit from Washington.

The pressure on the lawmaker first elected in 1964 came after Deanna Maher, who ran a Michigan office for Conyers from 1997 to 2005, accused him of several incidents of sexual misconduct. She told The Associated Press Tuesday that the first incident occurred in 1997 during a three-day Congressional Black Caucus event in Washington, which she said she "felt honored" to attend.

Maher said while she was in the bedroom of a hotel suite, Conyers walked in, called room service and ordered sandwiches.

"I had my nightclothes on," said Maher, who now lives in the Holland area in western Michigan. "I was just scared to death. I was married at the time. He sat in the bedroom taking his clothes off. I didn't say anything and he didn't say anything."

Nothing happened between them, she added.

"He didn't go naked. He was down to his skivvies," Maher said. "He sat there eating sandwiches and then he stormed out and slammed the door. I was so embarrassed and ashamed of myself for being so stupid. I needed a job."

"He didn't put his hand on me, but the message was loud and clear," she said.

The House Ethics Committee is investigating Conyers, who announced Sunday that he would step aside as the top Democrat on the Judiciary Committee.

"We are at a watershed moment for our country in the fight against sexual harassment and discrimination," Pelosi wrote to the committee. "The Committee on Ethics has a great responsibility to proceed expeditiously as well as fairly into any investigation of credible harassment and discrimination allegations."

Conyers is among a number of prominent men in politics, entertainment and journalism who have been accused of sexual misconduct in the wake of explosive allegations against former Hollywood executive Harvey Weinstein. Also last week, Republican Rep. Joe Barton apologized for a nude photograph leaked on social media.

Maher's allegations against Conyers initially were reported by The Detroit News. She said there were other incidents involving unwanted touching in a car in 1998 and unwanted touching of her legs under her dress in 1999.

Conyers was driving the two to a Detroit-area airport in 1998 when he began touching her leg, Maher told the AP.

"He was feeling me up," she said. "He was an older guy, a terrible driver and all over Interstate 75. He was stopped by a (Michigan State Police) trooper."

Conyers' attorney, Arnold Reed, said Maher's allegations are uncorroborated and Conyers denies wrongdoing.

"John Conyers has always said he's not guilty of harassing these women," Reed said. "Any woman or man that is violated, that's unacceptable — completely unacceptable. By the same token, a person has a right to protest his innocence. This is what we call due process. Mr. Conyers wants to be cooperative and will be cooperative with any investigation."

Last week, BuzzFeed News reported that the 88-year-old lawmaker had settled a complaint in 2015 from a woman staffer who alleged she was fired because she rejected his sexual advances.

BuzzFeed reported that Conyers' office paid the woman over \$27,000 to settle the complaint under a confidentiality agreement. BuzzFeed also published affidavits from former staff members who said they had witnessed Conyers touching female staffers inappropriately or requesting sexual favors.

Associated Press reporter Alan Fram in Washington and videographer Mike Householder in Detroit contributed to this story. Corey Williams reported from Detroit.

Manning benching low point of a year the Giants went south

By TOM CANAVAN, AP Sports Writer

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. (AP) — The benching of Eli Manning for the first time in 13 seasons is probably the low point of a season in which the New York Giants did almost nothing right.

Let's start with the decision by coach Ben McAdoo and management to sit Manning with five games left in the regular season.

Sure, the Giants are 2-9, out of the playoff picture and they need to find out something about backup quarterbacks Geno Smith and rookie Davis Webb.

Benching the 36-year-old Manning wasn't the right thing to do, and it wasn't handled properly.

If anyone doubts that all they would have had to do was see the tears welling in the two-time Super Bowl MVP's eyes and the heartbreak his quivering chin displayed when asked how much this hurt.

The Giants offered Manning the opportunity to start and keep his streak of 210 consecutive starts alive, but the 14-year veteran didn't want to be part of a sham. If you start, you play to win, not keep a streak alive.

The wrong move has been par for the Giants, who were coming off an 11-5 season that got them into the playoffs for the first time since 2011.

However, all the close games the team won last season, it lost this year.

Injuries to Odell Beckham Jr. and fellow receiver Brandon Marshall hurt, but that wasn't the reason the Giants, who have 19 players on injured reserve, lost this season.

The Giants knew after last season that they needed to improve a weak offensive line and general manager Jerry Reese did little to do that. He signed guard D.J. Fluker when New York needed a solid tackle.

The offense as a whole also needed work. Beckham was the catalyst and had no supporting cast other than Manning and slot receiver Sterling Shepard. The signing of Marshall as the second outside receiver proved to be a bust, and the line only occasionally created holes for the running game.

McAdoo, who showed talent as the offensive coordinator under Tom Coughlin, has failed to get the offense in gear for Manning the past two years. Manning is a pocket quarterback who has been hit a lot the past two seasons playing without a line, a running game and viable outside receivers other than Beckham.

While the defense had most of its key players returning this season, something seemed to be missing. Steve Spagnuolo's unit was very good at closing out games last season. In getting off to a 0-5 start, the defense failed to hold fourth-quarter leads in consecutive losses to Philadelphia, Tampa Bay and the Chargers.

Even the special teams have struggled with punter Brad Wing having an inconsistent season and rookie placekicker Aldrick Rosas missing five of 18 field goal attempts and booting a couple of kickoff out of bounds.

The losses took a toll on the players with cornerbacks Dominique Rodgers-Cromartie and Janoris Jenkins each being suspended by McAdoo for a game for breaking team rules.

It led many to wonder if McAdoo had lost control of the team in only his second season and whether he would be back next year.

Co-owners John Mara and Steve Tisch have to decide his future. Reese is almost sure to be fired.

"This is not a statement about anything other than we are 2-9, and we have to do what is best for the organization moving forward, and that means evaluating every position," Reese said in a statement Tuesday. "I told Eli this morning that an organization could not ask for any more in a franchise quarterback. He has been that and more. Nobody knows what the future holds, but right now, this is what we think is best for the franchise."

Former center and current NFL Network analyst Shaun O'Hara summed up the frustration of Giants' fans.

"It's a gut punch to everybody, whether you're former player, whether you played with Eli, against Eli, whether you're a fan," O'Hara said. "This feels like a punch right to the stomach. I've been sick, I've been angry. I've also been relieved because now Eli doesn't have to go out there and try to win games with that shoddy roster and the people around him."

Whether Manning returns remains to be seen.

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"We talked," said Archie Manning. Eli's father and a former NFL quarterback. "Eli's a big boy, he's played a lot. He's a tough guy. I'm very confident Eli will handle it."

Black, Latino acts rule Grammy noms with Jay-Z in front seat

By MESFIN FEKADU, AP Music Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The Recording Academy sent a clear message when they announced the nominees for the 2018 Grammys: They want to see a black or Latino act have a better shot at winning in the major categories.

Black and Latino musicians dominated in the top four categories, including album and song of the year, giving those acts who perform rap, R&B and Latin music a strong chance at taking home the biggest awards, usually reserved for pop, rock and country musicians, or white artists.

In the past, acts like Beyonce, Kanye West, Eminem and Alicia Keys were leaders in nominations, but would never win awards like record of the year.

This year there is a shift.

Jay-Z, rap's most powerful force, is the top nominee with eight, the academy announced Tuesday. Jay-Z's nominations include album, song and record of the year.

"It's just time," said No I.D., who produced Jay-Z's entire "4:44" album and is nominated in the top three categories alongside the rap icon. "I believe that when you really make the best music you can make from your heart, it will transcend all of those stereotypes, color issues, everything, because music is really made for human beings."

Kendrick Lamar, another artist who has never won album, song or record of the year despite multiple nominations, is also up for the top prize with his third effort, "DAMN." Other album of the year nominees include Bruno Mars' "24K Magic," Childish Gambino's "Awaken, My Love!" and Lorde's "Melodrama," making the New Zealand singer the only white act up for the prize.

Justin Bieber, a featured guest on Luis Fonsi and Daddy Yankee's ubiquitous hit "Despacito," is the only white performer nominated for record of the year. Bieber and singer-songwriter Julia Michaels are the only white nominees for song of the year. And Michaels is the only white act up for best new artist; she will compete with SZA, Khalid, Alessia Cara and Lil Uzi Vert.

Neil Portnow, the academy's CEO and president, said the organization took time this year to work hard at diversifying its voting membership, which includes more than 13,000 people.

"You look at the nominations this year and I think that's clearly a reflection of the fact that we've done a lot of good work there," he said.

The Grammys has a long history of black and Latino artists, as well as rap and R&B acts, losing in major categories despite appearing as the clear front runner. The organization was criticized earlier this year when Adele's "25" album won album of the year over Beyonce's "Lemonade." Though Adele's project outsold Beyonce's, "Lemonade" was viewed as an artistic, bold and daring project that truly owned the year. Even Adele said Beyonce should have won instead of her.

But, now, Jay-Z's own work of art may bring the Carters the gold. Though "4:44" debuted at No. 1, it is not Jay-Z's best-selling album nor does it have multiple hits like his past projects. However, his 13th album has been viewed as a brave and personal album revealing stories about his life and showcases that, at 47, he is still relevant and a cultural force in music, where youngsters tend to dominate.

"I'm really happy Jay had the 100 percent courage to really open up and that's where I think this connection comes from — I think this is a genuine moment that people know in their hearts, like, 'This wasn't a trick ... this was the opening up of a human being giving us something special,'" said No I.D.

"We collectively approached it with certain principals that rock albums use," he added. "There's not too many one-producer rap albums. There are lot of one-producer rock albums ... and country albums."

"Despacito," which earned nominations for record and song of the year, also turned heads when the nominations were announced Tuesday. While it is no surprise the song is nominated — it spent 16 weeks on top of the Billboard Hot 100 chart — it is rare to see a song mostly in Spanish compete in major cat-

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egories alongside English songs at the Grammys.

"The biggest thing for me is being able to break the language barrier. It's very hard to do. I'm bi-cultural. I'm Puerto Rican. I was born in the United States. I know how hard it is for somebody to really just connect to a song when it's in a different language," Fonsi said. "That's what I'm proud of — to be able to celebrate my culture through music and to have people dancing and enjoying it, although it's not their typical go-to song or language."

"Despacito" also earned Fonsi, Yankee and Bieber a nomination for best pop duo/group performance.

Behind Jay-Z, Lamar scored seven nominations while Mars earned six. Those who scored five nominations were black acts, including Childish Gambino, SZA, Khalid and No I.D.

"When you really make things that really challenge the status quo or challenge issues and you do it artistically and you do it with no fear, people are listening," No I.D. said. "As much as you act like everything is programmed or calculated or researched or numbers, spins, radio and clubs, it's still human beings out here you can reach with music."

The producer said he was "happy" with the nominations. But was Jay-Z?

"Um, yes," said No I.D., who spoke to Jay-Z by phone on Tuesday. "He's a cool guy so part of him is always cool, but, you know, we both have been pretty quiet about it all. I think we wanted the music to speak more than (us)."

"I'm speaking today because I am happy. I am happy that (the music) spoke to some people," he said.

The 2018 Grammy Awards take place in New York City on January 28, 2018.

Online:

<http://www.grammy.com>

Nevada high-rise suspected gunman dead, hostage safe

RENO, Nevada (AP) — A gunman with a hostage opened fire from the eighth floor of a luxury high-rise condominium in Nevada onto the streets below, authorities said. No injuries were reported.

The man died Tuesday after a SWAT team descended on him while he was barricaded at the Montage, Reno police Deputy Chief Tom Robinson told reporters. It wasn't immediately clear whether he was killed by police gunfire or his own. No one else, including the hostage, was hurt.

The gunman's name has not been released. Robinson described him only as a young adult.

The luxury high-rise is surrounded by some of downtown Reno's most popular casinos, and the gunfire brought eerie echoes of the Las Vegas shooting two months earlier that killed dozens. But there were no reported injuries in Tuesday's attack as the streets were mostly empty on a cold weeknight.

Stephen Paddock, the man who opened fire from the 32nd floor of the Mandalay Bay hotel and casino onto an outdoor concert below killing 58 people, had owned a unit at the Montage. Records show he sold the property in December 2016.

"When you heard it's coming from above it reminds you of the guy shooting from Mandalay Bay," said Mike Pavicich, who was in town on business from Las Vegas and was standing atop a parking garage at the neighboring Eldorado Resort Casino when the shots rang out.

"It's scary, you know?" Pavicich told the Review-Journal. "This is the same kind of town."

The building was once a casino itself before it was converted into luxury condos, according to its website.

Trooper Chris Kelley of the Nevada Highway Patrol told the Reno Gazette-Journal that shots were heard from the building for at least 20 minutes, and TV news reporters said they heard several shots after arriving, though the shots were sporadic, not constant.

Sixty-four-year-old Paddock modified an AR-15 to loose a stream of constant bullets like an automatic weapon in the attack at Las Vegas, which is 450 miles (724 kilometers) south.

Conservative speaker arrested at UConn after altercation

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STORRS, Conn. (AP) — A conservative commentator was arrested at the University of Connecticut Tuesday night after an altercation during his speech titled "It's OK To Be White."

Lucian Wintrich's speech was cut short when a young woman in the audience appeared to take paper-work off the lectern he was using and then began to leave.

Cellphone videos posted on Twitter show Wintrich running up to the woman and grabbing her before other audience members get involved.

Police quickly stepped in and led Wintrich away. He was charged with breach of peace and later released.

Wintrich took to Twitter early Wednesday to blame UConn students for being "violent and disruptive."

"It's really unfortunate that some of the kids at @UConn felt the need to be violent and disruptive during a speech that focused on how the leftist media is turning Americans against each other," he wrote. "Tonight proved my point."

UConn spokeswoman Stephanie Reitz said a student was charged with breach of peace and criminal mischief for allegedly breaking a window as people were leaving the event.

Reitz said that student was not charged in connection with a smoke bomb that was thrown inside. That remained under investigation. She said police were reviewing videos "to determine if any additional charges or arrests of others are warranted."

Wintrich is the White House correspondent for the right-wing blog Gateway Pundit, which said the talk would be about "identity politics" in today's cultural and political landscape.

UConn's College Republicans student group sponsored Tuesday night's event, which was repeatedly interrupted by people in the audience booing and chanting before the altercation.

"UConn does not bar speakers on the basis of content. Free speech, like academic freedom, is one of the university's bedrock principles," Reitz said.

UConn President Susan Herbst called it "a very disappointing evening."

"We live in a tense and angry time of deep political division. Our hope as educators is that creative leadership and intellectual energy can be an antidote to that sickness, especially on university campuses," Herbst said. "Between the offensive remarks by the speaker who also appeared to aggressively grab an audience member and the reckless vandalism that followed, that was certainly not the case on our campus tonight. We are better than this."

Campus police said beforehand that they would be taking measures to ensure public safety.

The College Republicans said flyers advertising the event had been torn down or defaced across campus.

UConn's College Democrats said they were sponsoring a discussion before the speech so activists from across the campus community could express their views.

Ivanka Trump's India visit raises questions about her brand

By MUNEZA NAQVI, Associated Press

HYDERABAD, India (AP) — Ivanka Trump described the hurdles faced by women during a speech at a business conference in India, which is treating her trip like a royal visit.

But her solo outing also highlighted questions about whether her message of empowering poor women matches her actions.

Trump's speech Tuesday at the Global Entrepreneurship Summit in the southern city of Hyderabad was broadcast live throughout India by major news channels. A buildup worthy of a Bollywood musical included cultural references that ranged from independence leader Mahatma Gandhi to the movie "Slumdog Millionaire."

The city had cleared away beggars and filled potholes ahead of the visit by Trump, the daughter of President Donald Trump and a senior presidential adviser.

"As a former entrepreneur, employer, and executive in a male-dominated industry, I've seen firsthand that all too often women must do more than their male counterparts to prove themselves at work, while also disproportionately caring for their families at home," Trump said in her speech.

But the conference's focus on female entrepreneurs raises questions about some of the commercial

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decisions made by Trump and her namesake brand.

Critics have faulted her for failing to use her leadership role to call out labor and human rights abuses, particularly in China, where the bulk of her U.S. merchandise ships from. And they point out that she has failed to take a public stand on alleged abuses in her brand's own supply chain.

Trump stepped back from day-to-day management of her brand before taking on an official role as White House adviser, but still retains an ownership interest.

"After my father's election, I saw an opportunity to leave my businesses for the privilege of serving our country, and empowering all Americans to succeed," she said in the speech.

Her father praised her speech, saying "Great work Ivanka!" in a tweet late Tuesday in which he shared a U.S. State Department video of her remarks.

Abigail Klem, president of the Ivanka Trump brand, has called supply chain integrity "a top priority," but the brand has not joined the growing number of companies that publicly identify their manufacturers.

A September investigation by The Associated Press showed that Trump's supply chain has become more opaque than ever since she took on her White House role, making it impossible to know whom her company is doing business with around the world. The brand has said supply chains are the responsibility of its licensees.

Earlier this month, 23 rights groups signed a letter urging Trump, her brand and two licensees to publish the names and addresses of suppliers.

They also urged Trump and her brand to publicly demand that the Chinese government not prosecute three activists detained this past summer while investigating the brand's supply chain, and allow independent monitoring of factories.

Trump was joined at Tuesday's conference by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"What you are achieving here is truly extraordinary," Trump said. "From your childhood selling tea to your election as India's prime minister, you've proven that transformational change is possible."

Modi was scheduled to host Trump for dinner at the luxurious Falaknuma Palace Hotel.

"This event showcases the close ties between the United States of America and India," Modi said. "It underlines our shared commitment to entrepreneurship and innovation."

Trump did not spend a lot of time during her speech discussing U.S. politics, although she did say the administration was "laser focused on passing long overdue tax cuts."

The cleanup of Hyderabad, a southern technology hub, began a month ahead of the conference, when the city began rounding up several hundred homeless people and beggars.

Officials said the drive against begging was launched because two international events were taking place in the city — the entrepreneurship summit and the World Telugu Conference in December. Begging is a criminal offense in India and can be punished by as much as 10 years in prison, although the law is rarely enforced.

Beggars tend to crowd around cars at traffic signals, knocking on windows and asking for food and money. They include children as young as 5, who weave through dangerous traffic and often perform small acrobatic acts.

"It's cool that she's coming," said Amani Bhugati, a medical student, before the speech. "She's glamorous, beautiful and powerful. It's like a combination of Hollywood and politics."

Others marveled at the improvements made around Hyderabad. "All new," said Gopal, a taxi driver who gave only his first name.

But he also pointed to the potholes that remain on many smaller streets. "She's not coming here, so they didn't fix it," he said.

More than 1,200 people were attending the three-day conference, although not everyone was thrilled about Trump's presence.

"It's now being called Ivanka Trump's summit. It totally overshadows all our work," said Sangeeta Agarwal, the chief executive of U.S. startup Helpsy Health. "We feel that's it become more about her."

The annual entrepreneurship conference has a theme this year of "Women first, prosperity for all," and involves networking, mentoring and workshops.

Trump was to host at least two panel discussions before leaving Wednesday.

Associated Press writer Erika Kinetz in Shanghai contributed to this report.

GOP shoves tax overhaul ahead; shutdown still a threat

By ALAN FRAM and ANDREW TAYLOR, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Republicans held together and shoved their signature tax overhaul a crucial step ahead Tuesday as wavering GOP senators showed a growing openness. But its fate remained uncertain, and a planned White House summit aimed at averting a government shutdown was derailed when President Donald Trump savaged top Democrats and declared on Twitter, "I don't see a deal!"

"It's time to stop tweeting and start leading," Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer retorted after he and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi rebuffed the budget meeting with Trump and top Republicans.

Trump lunched with GOP senators at the Capitol and declared it a "love fest," as he had his previous closed-doors visit. But the day underscored the party's yearlong problem of unifying behind key legislation — even a bill slashing corporate taxes and cutting personal taxes that's a paramount party goal.

Tuesday's developments also emphasized the leverage Democrats have as Congress faces a deadline a week from Friday for passing legislation to keep federal agencies open while leaders seek a longer-term budget deal. Republicans lack the votes to pass the short-term legislation without Democratic support.

In a party-line 12-11 vote, the Senate Budget Committee managed to advance the tax measure to the full Senate as a pair of wavering Republicans — Wisconsin's Ron Johnson and Tennessee's Bob Corker — fell into line, at least for the moment. In more good news for the GOP, moderate Sen. Susan Collins of Maine said it was a "fair assumption" that she was likelier to support the bill after saying Trump agreed to make property taxes up to \$10,000 deductible instead of eliminating that break entirely.

But the fate of the legislation remained uncertain as it headed toward debate by the full Senate, which Republicans control by a slender 52-48. GOP leaders can afford just two defectors, and a half dozen or more in their party have been uncommitted. They include some wanting bigger tax breaks for many businesses but others cringing over the \$1.4 trillion — or more — that the measure is projected to add to budget deficits over the next decade.

"It's a challenging exercise," conceded Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky. He compared it to "sitting there with a Rubik's Cube and trying to get to 50" votes, a tie that Vice President Mike Pence would break.

Corker, who's all but broken with Trump over the president's behavior in office, is among a handful of Republicans uneasy over the mountains of red ink the tax measure is expected to produce. He said he was encouraged by discussions with the White House and party leaders to include a mechanism — details still unknown — to automatically trigger tax increases if specified, annual economic growth targets aren't met.

"I think we're getting to a very good place on the deficit issue," Corker said.

But other Republicans are wary of backing legislation that would hold the hammer of potential future tax increases over voters' heads.

"I am not going to vote to automatically implement tax increases on the American people. If I do that, consider me drunk," said Sen. John Kennedy of Louisiana.

Collins said she'd also won agreement that before completing the tax measure, Congress would approve legislation restoring federal payments to health insurers that Trump scuttled last month. That bill has had bipartisan support, but it's unclear if Democrats would back it amid partisan battling over the tax bill.

McConnell and House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., met with Trump at the White House despite the top Democrats' no-shows. Trump highlighted their absence by appearing before reporters flanked by two empty chairs bearing Schumer's and Pelosi's names.

Trump said Democrats would be to blame for any shutdown, despite GOP domination of government.

"If it happens it's going to be over illegals pouring into the country, crime pouring into the country, no border wall, which everyone wants," he said. He also said North Korea's launch of a ballistic missile on

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Wednesday should prompt Democrats to renew negotiations over the spending legislation, which includes Pentagon funding.

"But probably they won't because nothing to them is important other than raising taxes," Trump said.

Trump repeated those claims Tuesday night on Twitter, writing that Democrats "can't now threaten a shutdown to get their demands."

Democrats noted that in May, Trump tweeted the country "needs a good 'shutdown' in September to fix mess!" In a tweet of her own Tuesday, Pelosi said Trump's "verbal abuse will no longer be tolerated," adding in reference to the empty-chairs show, "Poor Ryan and McConnell relegated to props. Sad!"

A temporary spending bill expires Dec. 8 and another is needed to prevent a government shutdown. Hurricane aid to help Texas, Florida, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands is also expected to be included in that measure, as well as renewed financing for a children's health program that serves more than 8 million low-income children.

Democrats are also pressing for legislative protections for immigrants known as "Dreamers." Conservative Republicans object to including that issue in the crush of year-end business. But GOP Rep. Carlos Curbelo of Florida joined Democrats in saying he won't vote for the spending bill unless the immigrant issue is resolved.

AP reporters Matthew Daly, Kevin Freking and Stephen Ohlemacher contributed.

Judge sides with Trump's pick to take over consumer agency

By JESSICA GRESKO and KEN SWEET, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump scored a victory Tuesday when a federal judge refused to block the president's choice to temporarily run the nation's top consumer financial watchdog and, for the moment, ended a two-way battle for leadership of the agency.

Judge Timothy Kelly declined to stop the Republican president from putting Mick Mulvaney in place as the acting director of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. In doing so, Kelly ruled against Leandra English, the bureau's deputy director, who had requested an emergency restraining order to stop Mulvaney from becoming the acting director.

Mulvaney and English had claimed to be the rightful acting director, each citing different federal laws. The leadership crisis developed over the weekend after the bureau's permanent director, Richard Cordray, resigned and appointed English as his successor. Shortly afterward, the White House announced that Mulvaney, currently budget director, would take over the bureau on an interim basis.

The judge's ruling Tuesday is not the final decision in the case. But in making his decision, the judge said that English had not shown a substantial likelihood that she eventually would succeed on the merits of her case. The judge's decision is not immediately appealable.

The judge was nominated by Trump and was confirmed by the majority-Republican Senate in September.

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau was established after the financial crisis to make sure that customers are not being exploited and that banks are complying with the consumer protection laws on the books. Cordray, appointed by President Barack Obama, was criticized by congressional Republicans as being overzealous but was lauded by consumer advocates for aggressively going after banks for wrongdoing.

On Monday, Mulvaney said the bureau under a Trump administration would act differently than the agency under the Obama administration.

Lawyers for English will have to make a choice about how to proceed. After the hearing, a lawyer for English, Deepak Gupta, said he hopes to be able to move the case along quickly.

"I'm going to have to explore the options with my client, so I don't know what the next step is and I'm not going to say that right now," he said, adding options include asking the judge for a final decision on the merits of the case.

Gupta said it is not in his client's interest or the government's interest to have a "cloud of impropriety and uncertainty hanging over the bureau for any longer than is necessary."

The White House said it "applauds the court's decision," saying it provides "further support for the president's rightful authority to designate Director Mulvaney as acting director of the CFPB."

Trump's authority to install Mulvaney was backed up by Mary McLeod, the bureau's general counsel, who wrote a memo over the weekend agreeing with the White House that Mulvaney should be recognized as acting director. The Office of Legal Counsel, which acts as a legal adviser to the president, also argued that Mulvaney, not English, was the legitimate acting director of the agency.

Sweet reported from New York.

Trump's 'Pocahontas' jab at Navajo event draws blowback

By FELICIA FONSECA and LAURIE KELLMAN, Associated Press

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. (AP) — Families of Native American war veterans and politicians of both major parties are criticizing President Donald Trump for using a White House event honoring Navajo Code Talkers to take a political jab at a Democratic senator he has nicknamed "Pocahontas."

The Republican president on Monday turned to the name he often deployed for Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren during the 2016 presidential campaign to mock her claims about being part Native American. He told the three Navajo Code Talkers on stage that he had affection for them that he doesn't have for her.

"It was uncalled for," said Marty Thompson, whose great-uncle was a Navajo Code Talker. "He can say what he wants when he's out doing his presidential business among his people, but when it comes to honoring veterans or any kind of people, he needs to grow up and quit saying things like that."

Pocahontas is well-known as a Disney princess but less so for the sacrifices she made to save her people from British forces in the 1600s in present-day Virginia, descendants of her tribal community say. Whether Trump's remark constitutes a racial slur depends on who you ask, but most critics agree it was inappropriate.

Warren said Trump's repeated references to her as "Pocahontas" will not keep her from speaking out.

"Now he seems to think that that's somehow going to shut me up, maybe keep me from talking about the consumer agency today," Warren said Tuesday after a protest outside the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. "Or keep me from talking about the tax bill that would favor giant corporations instead of working families."

"He's wrong. It's not going to make any difference," Warren said.

All he "had to do was make it through the ceremony," she said. "But that wasn't possible for Donald Trump. He had to throw in a racial slur."

White House spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders, said Monday that she didn't believe the remark was a racial slur and that "was certainly not the president's intent."

Trump made the comment as he stood near a portrait of President Andrew Jackson, which he hung in the Oval Office in January. Trump admires Jackson's populism. But Jackson is an unpopular figure in Indian Country because he oversaw the forced removal of American Indians from their southern homelands.

The Navajo Nation suggested Trump's remark was an example of "cultural insensitivity," and they resolved to stay out of the "ongoing feud between the senator and President Trump."

"All tribal nations still battle insensitive references to our people. The prejudice that Native American people face is an unfortunate historical legacy," Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye said in a statement.

Still, Begaye and relatives of Navajo Code Talkers said they're honored the story of the men recruited from the vast Southwest reservation to become Marines could be told on a national stage. Peter MacDonald, a former Navajo chairman and trained Code Talker, who stood beside Trump, also took the opportunity to ask for support for a Navajo Code Talker museum. Trump obliged.

Michael Smith, a Marine whose father was a Code Talker, said most of the Code Talkers would be skeptical about going to the White House because it could be construed to mean they support a political cause.

"So, why did they go? Why were they there? He's putting them in the Oval Office to say 'You did a good job, and say hi to Pocahontas?'" Smith said. "They should be taken care of as heroes, not as pawns."

Michael Nez, whose father helped develop the code based on the Navajo language, said his father would

have been upset to hear Trump's "Pocahontas" comment. But, as other Code Talker relatives said, his father was taught to respect the president as the commander in chief.

"It's too bad he does put his foot in his mouth," Nez said. "Why he does it? I don't know."

The president has long feuded with Warren, an outspoken Wall Street critic who leveled blistering attacks on Trump during the campaign. Trump seized on questions about Warren's heritage, which surfaced during her 2012 Senate race challenging incumbent Republican Sen. Scott Brown.

Warren says her parents told her of the Native American connection and she listed herself with that heritage in law school directories to meet others with similar backgrounds.

"Our nation owes a debt of gratitude to the Navajo Code Talkers, whose bravery, skill & tenacity helped secure our decisive victory over tyranny & oppression during WWII," Arizona Republican Sen. John McCain, a decorated veteran of the Vietnam War, tweeted Tuesday. "Politicizing these genuine American heroes is an insult to their sacrifice."

Kellman reported from Washington, D.C. Associated Press writers Catherine Lucey and Jill Colvin in Washington, D.C., contributed to this report.

Fonseca is a member of The Associated Press' Race and Ethnicity team. Follow her on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/FonsecaAP>. Follow Kellman on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/APLaurieKellman>.

Aspiring actress details allegations against Weinstein

By COLLEEN LONG, Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — An aspiring actress who met Harvey Weinstein by chance in 2014 detailed in tears Tuesday how she said the media mogul made her stand in front of a mirror in his hotel room in Cannes, France, while he stood behind her, groping her and forcing her to perform a sex act after pretending to be interested in her career.

Kadian Noble, 31, filed a lawsuit in federal court in Manhattan a day earlier. Her attorney Jeff Herman said he sued under a criminal sex trafficking statute of engaging in commercial sex act overseas because Weinstein is a U.S. citizen who coerced Noble under the guise of helping with her career.

"By offering Kadian help with her career, and then getting her to comply with his advances — that's the quid pro quo," Herman said. The lawsuit seeks unspecified damages.

A spokeswoman for Weinstein said he "denies allegations of non-consensual sex" and "has further confirmed that there were never any acts of retaliation against any women for refusing his advances."

Noble detailed the incident to reporters, saying that she met Weinstein by chance in 2014 at an after-party for the British Academy Film Awards, where he introduced her to Oprah Winfrey and Naomi Campbell, and she felt dazzled and lucky when he said he was interested in her.

He told her to contact an assistant and send them a demo reel. Later that year, he approached her in a hotel lobby at Cannes, which flattered her, and he suggested they look at her reel in his hotel room, she said. But when she got up there, it slowly dawned on her he was after something else.

"He was repeating to me, 'I need to know that you really like me,'" she said. "At this point it became a little bit confusing but still I had a lot of hope."

He grabbed her arm and stood her in front of a mirror where he groped her and then forced her to perform a sex act, she said.

"And I kept saying no, and I just felt so stupid. But at the same time a massive part of me had shut down. It makes no sense that I didn't run out of the room. And all I was able to do was just say no."

She said after the incident, his assistants never got back to her. Eventually she detailed the assault to one, who tried to convince her that he was a "good guy."

The worst part for Noble, she said, is it ruined her dream of becoming an actress. She never got a part in a film and has since stepped away from the profession. She felt like her career was going to take off after meeting him — but it was all a lie, she said.

"People believe in you," she said, addressing Weinstein. "It's not been fair that you've used the power, the gift you have, you've turned it into such a corruption."

Noble, who lives in London, said she reported details of the crime to the NYPD in recent weeks, which is investigating claims against Weinstein; police officials have said they are referring cases to other jurisdictions as necessary. Police in London, Los Angeles and Beverly Hills are also investigating Weinstein after at least 75 other actresses, models and others have come forward to detail alleged conduct by Weinstein ranging from sexual harassment to forcible rape. Meanwhile, New York police have said a 2010 rape allegation here is credible and may result in criminal charges.

Another civil lawsuit was filed Monday in London by a different woman who was not identified. Her attorney Jill Greenfield says her client was seeking damages for "personal injury" plus expenses and "consequential loss" arising out of a series of sexual assaults by Weinstein. Civil claims for rape and sexual assault are uncommon in Britain.

Obama re-emerges on global stage with trip to Asia, France

By JOSH LEDERMAN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Now a private citizen, former President Barack Obama re-emerged on the global stage Tuesday as he opened a three-country tour that includes meetings with the leaders of China and India, just as President Donald Trump courts those same world powers.

During a five-day trip, Obama will mix paid speeches with foreign leader meetings and even a town hall event for young people, the signature event that Obama became known for around the world during his eight years in office. He'll finish the trip in France, where he'll give one of several speeches planned during the trip.

The tour continues a longstanding tradition of former U.S. presidents traveling overseas after leaving office, especially as they work to attract donations and other support for their foundations, libraries and presidential centers. But Obama's trip may garner particular attention, given that many foreign countries are still uncertain about Trump's foreign policy and may look to his predecessor to help explain America's current direction.

"Barack Obama is the great explainer to the rest of the world of what the heck is going on in America," said Douglas Brinkley, a presidential historian at Rice University. "He's a calming influence in a world that's teetering on frenzy right now. Obama arrives and it reminds them of old-style diplomacy and the dignity of statesmanship."

Obama arrived on Tuesday in Shanghai, where he was to speak at a business conference before traveling to Beijing to speak at an education event. He also planned to meet there with Chinese President Xi Jinping, who hosted Trump for a high-profile visit only a few weeks earlier. Obama's office said they planned to discuss the global economy, climate change and other issues.

Then the former president is off to India, where he'll meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi, give another speech and hold a town hall meeting hosted by Obama's foundation. Throughout his presidency, Obama often used the popular events in foreign countries to take questions about everything from politics and policy to his personal story and pop culture. Obama's office said roughly 280 young leaders planned to attend.

Obama will give a final speech Saturday in Paris before returning to the United States. Aides didn't rule out the possibility that he could also see President Emmanuel Macron, whose presidential campaign Obama endorsed, while in France.

Aides to the former president declined to say who was paying for the trip, but he'll be compensated for the speeches.

The trip comes as Trump is aggressively pushing China's leaders to cut off North Korea economically over its nuclear weapons program. Obama will also be in India just days after Trump's daughter and senior adviser, Ivanka Trump. The first daughter gave a speech Tuesday at a business conference that was widely disseminated on Indian television.

Since taking office, Trump has reversed much of Obama's foreign policy approach, including pulling out of a global climate change agreement that was forged after the U.S. and China teamed up on the issue. Trump has also irked France and other European allies by taking steps to undermine the nuclear deal that the U.S. and world powers struck with Iran in 2015.

Whatever Obama says about current events while abroad will surely be viewed through that heavily politicized lens. But historians said former presidents often try to mitigate the risk that their visit will undermine their successor by coordinating with the current White House in advance.

"When it's done right, the former president will check in before he goes, and see if there's anything he should or shouldn't do or say. It's a longstanding tradition," said Michael Duffy, author of "The Presidents Club: Inside the World's Most Exclusive Fraternity."

An Obama aide wouldn't say whether the former president or his staff had contacted Trump's White House ahead of the trip, but said that Obama's staff had reached out to the U.S. embassies in each country. The aide wasn't authorized to comment by name and requested anonymity. Former presidents retain Secret Service protection, so there's at least some U.S. government involvement in facilitating the trip.

Obama isn't the first ex-president to get the itch to travel after losing access to Air Force One.

By the time President Bill Clinton was out of office for four months, he'd already visited 10 countries, including China and India. Though then-President George W. Bush had adopted a far different foreign policy, Clinton was careful on the road not to criticize his successor directly.

President Jimmy Carter was sometimes criticized for overstepping his role as ex-president during his extensive overseas travels in the years after he left the Oval Office. In the years after World War II, former President Herbert Hoover traveled prolifically, helping secure food supplies for Europeans in need. Theodore Roosevelt gave a famous "Man in the Arena" speech at the Sorbonne in Paris as an ex-president.

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

AP Explains: How Trump's Pocahontas remark can be offensive

By FELICIA FONSECA, Associated Press

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. (AP) — Members of Virginia tribes that count Pocahontas among their ancestors said Tuesday that President Donald Trump should not use her name for political gain.

The historical figure is well-known through a Disney movie and Halloween costumes but less so for her sacrifices to protect her people from British forces, historians say.

The White House invited Navajo war veterans to Washington, D.C., on Monday to honor them for using a code based on their native language in World War II that the Japanese could not crack.

But the story became less about the Navajo Code Talkers and more about Pocahontas when Trump said, "We have a representative in Congress who they say was here a long time ago. They call her Pocahontas," referring to U.S. Sen. Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts in a bid to mock her claims about being part Native American.

Anne Richardson, chief of the Rappahannock Tribe in Virginia, said Trump showed he knows little about the role Pocahontas played in establishing the United States and disrespected Pocahontas and the Code Talkers in taking aim at Warren.

"He shouldn't use us to make his point about her," Richardson said. "Haven't we been used enough?"

Here's a look at Pocahontas and how people viewed the remark:

WHO WAS POCAHONTAS?

Pocahontas is universally known as the main character in the 1995 Disney movie of the same name, characterized as a young girl who fell in love with an Englishman despite her father's disapproval. Unlike other Disney princesses, Pocahontas was a real person who lived in present-day Virginia in the 1600s.

Rutgers University historian Camilla Townsend said Pocahontas wasn't a sexualized girl who turned her back on her people. Rather, Pocahontas was taken prisoner and agreed to marry colonist John Rolfe, not

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John Smith, in a diplomatic move to save her people from invading forces, Townsend said.

"All the existing evidence unites to show she did it because her father wanted her to," Townsend said. "They needed the peace."

Pocahontas was baptized as a Christian shortly after marriage and died in her late teens in England. The country marked the 400th anniversary of her death this year with festivals, exhibits and lectures.

POCAHONTAS AS A RACIAL SLUR?

Warren, whom Trump referred to as "Pocahontas" repeatedly during the 2016 presidential campaign, called his remark Monday a racial slur. White House spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders said it wasn't and that the president didn't intend it as one.

While the name Pocahontas itself isn't considered a racial slur, some say it turned into one because of the way Trump used it.

"When the president uses the name of Pocahontas as a pejorative with the intent to insult, it becomes a racial slur," the Native American Journalists Association said.

Jacqueline Pata, executive director of the National Congress of American Indians, says she would not characterize it as a racial slur but that it was used inappropriately.

"When I hear people use it in a manner that's not respectful of who she was as a person, that's a different story," she said.

The three Navajo Code Talkers at the White House event didn't visibly react to Trump's comment. But families of other Code Talkers say it was disrespectful to the men.

POCAHONTAS AND VIRGINIA TRIBES

Robert Gray is the chief of the Pamunkey Tribe, a community that once included Pocahontas. The tribe is Virginia's only federally recognized tribe with 200 members, a designation it received last year.

Gray said Tuesday that Trump's comment was inappropriate and that he was hopeful people would seek out valid sources of information on Pocahontas.

"We don't have the time or the resources to get involved every time President Trump uses nicknames for various people," he said.

Kent Adams, chief emeritus of the neighboring Upper Mattaponi Indian Tribe, says Pocahontas is an icon of American Indian people and Trump should not use her name in a disparaging way or for political gain.

"He should leave her out of it," Adams said. "She should not be included in this conversation."

FCC head Ajit Pai goes after Hollywood, tech companies

By TALI ARBEL, AP Technology Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The head of the Federal Communications Commission defended his plan to undo the country's net-neutrality rules by bringing the culture wars to telecommunications policy.

There has been constant media coverage since Chairman Ajit Pai last week unveiled his plan to gut the Obama-era net neutrality rules, which were meant to keep broadband providers from playing favorites with websites and apps. Tech companies, including Airbnb, Etsy and Twitter, sent him a letter in support of the current rules. Hollywood celebrities are speaking out against his proposal.

So Pai, a Republican picked by President Donald Trump to be the head of the FCC, is pushing back. His targets: the generally liberal bastions of Silicon Valley and Hollywood.

Pai's policies have been more favorable to the phone, cable and broadcasting industries than those of the Obama-era FCC. One criticism of Pai's plan to gut the net neutrality rules is that it will allow phone and cable companies to block some sites and apps while favoring others.

But Pai asserted in a Tuesday speech that internet companies are "a much bigger actual threat to an open internet" because they choose what people see on their services.

He called out Twitter specifically, contending that it takes action — such as suspending accounts or removing their "verified" status — against conservatives more frequently than liberals. He didn't specify who he was talking about, but Twitter this month "unverified" the account of white nationalist Richard Spencer.

Pai also noted that Twitter had blocked Rep. Marsha Blackburn, R-Tenn., from advertising a campaign

video, which he said was because it "featured a pro-life message." Twitter said Tuesday that it didn't censor her video but also doesn't want to expose users to "potentially distressing" ads. Twitter later decided to let Blackburn advertise the video, in which she says that she "stopped the sale of baby body parts."

"Websites and apps operate in a competitive environment with low barriers to entry where choice and competition are a click away. This stands in stark contrast to ISPs," said Noah Theran, spokesman for the Internet Association, a trade group for tech companies. Most Americans don't have a choice of home broadband service providers.

Pai also said he was calling out criticisms from Hollywood because of celebrities' "large online followings" that "give them outsized influence in shaping the public debate."

He said comments by Cher, Mark Ruffalo, Alyssa Milano and George Takei in support of net neutrality were "absurd" and replied to them in his speech.

AP EXCLUSIVE: Big contracts, no storm tarps for Puerto Rico

By TAMI ABDOLLAH and MICHAEL BIESECKER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — After Hurricane Maria damaged tens of thousands of homes in Puerto Rico, a newly created Florida company with an unproven record won more than \$30 million in contracts from the Federal Emergency Management Agency to provide emergency tarps and plastic sheeting for repairs.

Bronze Star LLC never delivered those urgently needed supplies, which even months later remain in demand by hurricane victims on the island.

FEMA eventually terminated the contracts, without paying any money, and re-started the process this month to supply more tarps for the island. The earlier effort took nearly four weeks from the day FEMA awarded the contracts to Bronze Star and the day it canceled them.

Thousands of Puerto Ricans remain homeless, and many complain that the federal government is taking too long to install tarps. The U.S. territory has been hit by severe rainstorms in recent weeks that have caused widespread flooding.

It is not clear how thoroughly FEMA investigated Bronze Star or its ability to fulfill the contracts. Formed by two brothers in August, Bronze Star had never before won a government contract or delivered tarps or plastic sheeting. The address listed for the business is a single-family home in a residential subdivision in St. Cloud, Florida.

One of the brothers, Kayon Jones, said manufacturers he contacted before bidding on the contracts assured him they could provide the tarps but later said they could not meet the government's requirements. Jones said supplying the materials was problematic because most of the raw materials came out of Houston, which was hit hard by Hurricane Harvey. He said he sought a waiver from FEMA to allow him to order tarps from a Chinese manufacturer and for more time, but FEMA denied the request.

FEMA canceled the contracts Nov. 6, Jones said. The government notified his brother and him a few days later that it would seek \$9.3 million in damages unless they signed a waiver releasing the U.S. from any liability. The brothers agreed.

"We were trying to help; it wasn't about making money or anything like that," Jones said.

FEMA awarded the company two contracts Oct. 10 to provide 500,000 tarps and 60,000 rolls of plastic sheeting. More than a half dozen others also bid, but FEMA said it could not provide details about their bids.

"The award of a government contract to a company with absolutely no experience in producing the materials sought obviously raises very bright red flags," said Dan Feldman, professor of public management at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice at City University of New York. "I would hope and assume that the inspector general for the Department of Homeland Security would begin immediately to take a very hard look at this process."

A FEMA spokesman, Ron Roth, said the agency's review process was "somewhat expedited" after Hurricane Maria to respond as quickly as possible to the emergency. But he said the agency did perform its due diligence.

"Submissions from potential contractors are objectively evaluated, and a contract is awarded based on

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the highest-rated submission," Roth said.

Such "best value" competitive solicitations take into account past performance and a contractor's ability to deliver as well as price, said Alan Miller, an attorney who spent 22-years advising federal contracting officials until retiring last year.

"In every circumstance, regardless of the award, whether it's \$400 to the local stationery company for envelopes, or it's \$400 million for a construction contract, the contracting officer is required to make a responsibility determination," Miller said. "Does this company have the infrastructure; do they have the inventory processes, the production processes, the financial capability, for performing the work?"

Nine bids were received on the first contract for plastic sheeting and eight bids on the second contract for tarps. Roth said Star was determined to be the most qualified.

"FEMA's initial technical evaluation determined Bronze Star could do the jobs based on their proposals, which confirmed that they could meet the product specifications and delivery dates," he said.

Kayon Jones, the co-owner of Bronze Star, served in the U.S. Navy from 1997 to 2000, finishing his duty as a seaman storekeeper on the USS Gettysburg, a guided missile cruiser. The contract solicitation gave preference to veteran-owned companies. According to Navy records, Jones was never awarded a Bronze Star, a medal earned by service members who serve heroically in combat.

In an interview, Jones told The Associated Press he picked the name because he has another company with the word star in it. He said his brother, who is also listed on state incorporation documents for the business, served in the Army and is disabled. Army records show Jones' brother also didn't receive a Bronze Star, and it provided no evidence of a service-related injury. Richard Jones did not respond to multiple calls and requests through his brother for comment.

"My brother and I, we are both veterans, so we just came up with a name to do business," Kayon Jones said. "We're not saying we have a Bronze Star or anything."

The day after FEMA canceled the Bronze Star contract, it awarded a contract to OSC Solutions Inc. for plastic sheeting for Hurricane Maria victims. The West Palm Beach, Florida-based company has roughly two decades of federal contracting experience and has produced such supplies multiple times.

The FEMA spokesman, Roth, acknowledged the contract problems delayed delivery of tarps to Puerto Rico but said anyone who needs a tarp should now be able to get one.

More than 93,000 tarps have been sent to distribution centers on the island and now are available to cover homes, Roth said. The Army Corps of Engineers' "Blue Roof" program has provided 11,000 more reinforced tarps installed on homes by contractors.

To date, roughly \$88 million in federal money has been awarded to four contractors, including Bronze Star, for tents and tarps, records show. The rescinded contracts with Bronze Star account for 35 percent of the total.

Michael Byrne, Puerto Rico's FEMA coordination officer, estimated that at least 60,000 blue roofs are needed across the island. About 350 are installed each day, though he said that is expected to increase.

"One of the limiting factors is the availability of the material," Byrne said.

AP writer Danica Coto in San Juan, Puerto Rico, contributed to this report. Follow Tami Abdollah on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/latams> and Michael Biesecker at <https://twitter.com/mbieseck>

Submit a confidential tip to The Associated Press at <https://www.ap.org/tips/>

Spring wedding at Windsor Castle for Prince Harry and Markle

By GREGORY KATZ and JILL LAWLESS, Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — It will be a spring wedding on the glorious grounds of Windsor Castle for love-struck Prince Harry and Meghan Markle.

Royal officials — thrilled with the international response to news of the couple's engagement, and the positive reaction to their first ever TV appearance — revealed a few key details Tuesday but kept mum

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on others, such as who will be Harry's best man?

The wedding will be in May, but the date has not been chosen, Harry's communications secretary, Jason Knauf, told a packed briefing at Buckingham Palace.

"In a happy moment in their lives, it means a great deal to them that so many people throughout the UK, the Commonwealth and around the world are celebrating with them," he said before fielding questions about things like how many of Markle's rescue dogs would move to Britain with her.

Knauf said Harry's grandmother, Queen Elizabeth II, had given permission for the couple to wed at St. George's Chapel, the historic church on the Windsor Castle grounds that has long been a touchstone for royal rites of passage. He said the 91-year-old monarch will attend the wedding.

Windsor Castle, west of London, is one of the queen's favorite residences. St. George's, the 15th-century chapel where the couple will wed, is more intimate than Westminster Abbey, where Harry's older brother, William, married Kate Middleton in 2011.

Knauf said Windsor "is a very special place for Prince Harry," and that he and Markle have regularly spent time there since they began dating about a year and a half ago.

He said the wedding "will be a moment of fun and joy that will reflect the characters of the bride and groom."

The image-conscious royals also made clear in a statement that the royal family, not British taxpayers, will foot the bill for what is expected to be a grand extravaganza. The family will pay for the church service, the music, the flowers, the decorations and the reception that follows.

Harry's press team is keeping some details private for the moment — perhaps because final decisions have not been made.

It's also not clear who will be Harry's best man, though older brother William would seem to be a strong contender.

Knauf also would not say whether Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby will preside over the service. And as for what titles will be given to Harry and Markle, that will be decided by the queen and revealed at a later date.

The palace was ready to answer some delicate questions about the 36-year-old Markle's move to Britain and her taking up a senior role in the royal family, sometimes called "the firm."

Knauf said she will comply with all immigration requirements and will become a British citizen, a process that may take several years, and will retain her U.S. citizenship throughout the process.

He did not say whether she would drop her U.S. citizenship at some point.

Asked about her religion, Knauf said Markle is a Protestant who will be baptized in the Church of England, which is headed by the queen in a largely ceremonial role.

Markle's personal belongings are being shipped from Canada, where she has lived for seven years while performing in the TV legal drama "Suits," to Nottingham Cottage, where she and Harry will live. The cottage is located on the grounds of Kensington Palace in central London.

She has already brought one of her two rescue pups, Guy, but the other — Bogart — is being left behind and will reside permanently with "good friends," Knauf said.

The union of the 33-year-old prince and Markle, an accomplished TV actress in her own right, represents a blending of Hollywood and royalty that is expected to draw an international audience — officials said it is a safe assumption that the service will be televised.

The couple will carry out their first official engagement on Friday, visiting a youth charity and a World AIDS Day event in Nottingham in central England. For Markle, it will be a first taste of life as a working royal.

Markle's divorced status would once have barred her from marrying the prince in church. Harry's father Prince Charles, who is heir to the British throne, married his wife Camilla in a low-key civil ceremony in 2005 because both bride and groom were divorced.

Camilla said Tuesday she was "delighted" her stepson was marrying the U.S. actress.

"America's loss is our gain," she said.

Newspapers hailed news of the engagement as a breath of fresh air and symbol of a modernizing mon-

archy.

The Daily Telegraph said in an editorial: "A divorced, mixed-race Hollywood actress who attended a Roman Catholic school is to marry the son of the next king. Such a sentence could simply not have been written a generation ago."

OPEC and allies likely to extend production cuts at meeting

By GEORGE JAHN, Associated Press

VIENNA (AP) — With bills rising for gasoline or heating oil, consumers around the world are paying the price for a decision by OPEC and Russia last year to cut production. The strategy is working for those oil-producing nations and will likely be extended at a meeting Thursday.

Benchmark crude prices are now close to \$60 a barrel, depending on the grades, up almost 20 percent since a year ago. The bets are that the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries will try to keep supply tight by prolonging output reductions agreed to a year ago.

For experts expecting such a scenario, the only question is for how long, with some predicting that production quotas agreed on in November 2016 will be stretched into all of 2018.

"The price surge since early October is clearly attributable to the expectation that OPEC will extend its production cuts again at its meeting this Thursday and that the oil market will tighten further as a result," analysts from Commerzbank Commodity Research wrote in a note to investors. "Anything other than an extension of the agreement would come as a big surprise and would trigger a massive price slide."

The ability of the 14-nation cartel to regulate prices and supply made it a sometimes feared factor for consuming nations in past decades. Most extreme was the 1973 OPEC oil embargo on Western consumers that led to widespread economic crises. But its role as a key regulator started fading in recent years, as U.S. shale producers started pumping up their output. That led to oversupply and a steep fall in prices from over \$100 to below \$40 a barrel by last year.

OPEC members in the past have regularly ignored production quotas in their drive for maximum profits. But the cartel's strategy to flood the market — and drive U.S. shale producers out of business — did not work. So it reversed course last year, joining forces with oil powerhouse Russia and other oil producing allies to crimp supplies. And with member states this time generally keeping to their production limits, OPEC Secretary General Mohammad Sanusi Barkindo says the alliance has attained its goal.

"We have accomplished what naysayers thought would be impossible," he told a 24-nation meeting of OPEC and non-OPEC allies this week. "The decisions we made were historic."

Even so, the strategy of continued cuts to drive up prices does not seem sustainable over the longer run. With prices now at two-year highs, U.S. producers who mothballed operations when oil was cheap are coming back into the market in force.

U.S. crude oil production already has grown by 15 percent since last year to nearly 10 million barrels per day, just behind Russia and Saudi Arabia. The International Energy Agency expects the U.S. to become the biggest net exporter by the end of the 2020s.

The extra crude is welcome for now, with the global economy booming. But at some point the balance could again tip from relatively tight supplies to an oversupply, and a drop in prices.

"An extension of the production cut agreement is still needed," to prevent oversupply, said the JBC Energy Market Report. "However, what the producers should not want is to starve the market too much going forward as U.S. shale in particular has proven again and again that it can surprise."

Geopolitics could yet strain OPEC unity on Thursday.

Traditional tensions between OPEC kingpin Saudi Arabia and Iran have spiked in recent month as they vie for Middle East dominance, exacerbating potentially different positions on oil. The Saudis favor continued cuts, but Iran is interested in greater market share as it claws back from the effect of more than a decade or sanctions that were lifted as part of its 2015 nuclear deal with six world powers. Now pumping below 4 million barrels a day, Iran has said it wants to add another 1 million barrels within three years.

Skeptical Democrats to quiz Trump health pick on drug prices

By RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR and LAURIE KELLMAN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Skeptical Democratic senators are getting a chance to question President Donald Trump's pick for health secretary about what he'll do about rising drug prices and the future of "Obamacare."

Alex Azar's first confirmation hearing — before the Senate Health Education, Labor and Pensions Committee — was scheduled for Wednesday. The former drug company and government executive has the support of committee Republicans. He's signaling that he wants to shift away from partisanship, and some prominent Democrats seem to be willing to give him a chance.

"While there may be disagreements on policy, I do think he's willing to hear people out," said former Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle, a Democrat who met with Azar recently and has known him for years.

"He's the best choice we have, given the current political situation," said Kavita Patel, a health care expert with the Brookings Institution, who worked in former President Barack Obama's administration and, before that, for the late Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, D-Mass.

All sides agree that Azar, 50, is headed for Senate confirmation, which would be his third after appointments to senior positions at the Department of Health and Human Services in the George W. Bush administration.

Nevertheless, he faces tough questioning, given the Senate's hyper-partisan atmosphere, which has sunk or battered other nominees.

Sen. Patty Murray of Washington, the health panel's ranking Democrat has tweeted her intent to ask Azar if he would be a toady for Trump's "extreme, politically driven & harmful agenda." Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., said she has "concerns" about whether Azar can deliver "better health care and lower drug prices."

In prepared remarks released Tuesday night, Azar said "drug prices are too high," placing the issue as his top priority. He shied away from detailed proposals, however, saying instead that he has the knowledge and experience to get drug companies, pharmacies, insurers and government programs to work toward solutions.

The Senate Finance Committee will hold another hearing on Azar soon and formally decide whether to send the nomination to the full Senate.

If confirmed, Azar would be Trump's second HHS secretary, replacing Tom Price, who resigned under pressure after using private charter flights at taxpayer expense.

Azar's career path could prove a challenge given Trump's vow to "drain the swamp" of Washington.

He'll face questions about whether his lucrative, decade-long stint as an executive with Indianapolis-based Eli Lilly and Co. will conflict with his work to lower drug prices. On Azar's watch, patient advocacy groups criticized Lilly for price increases to one of its biggest products: insulin.

In speeches while at the company, Azar questioned whether the government's regulatory machinery has kept up with the pace of scientific change, and he warned that price controls could stifle innovation — standard industry arguments.

"Will he carry pharma's water? I don't think so, based on my interactions with him," said former Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, a Republican from Tennessee. Like Daschle, he is active in the Bipartisan Policy Center, a Washington think tank.

Before resigning from Eli Lilly earlier this year, Azar built a financial portfolio now worth \$9.5 million to \$20.6 million, according to disclosure records filed with the Office of Government Ethics. He also was paid nearly \$2 million in his final year at the company, received a \$1.6 million severance and sold off more than \$3.4 million in Lilly stock. He also declared \$100,000 to \$1 million in capital gains from the sales, along with millions more in stock and bond holdings.

Azar is an Ivy League-educated lawyer with conservative credentials. Early on he built connections in Republican circles — he clerked for Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia, worked under Kenneth Starr during the Whitewater probe of President Bill Clinton's land deals and raised campaign cash for GOP presidential candidates Mitt Romney and Jeb Bush.

His previous posts at HHS allowed him to build relationships with Democrats, too. Daschle said he worked most closely with Azar in 2001, when Daschle was a South Dakota senator and anthrax was found in his office. Azar was then the HHS general counsel. Four years later, he was confirmed as deputy secretary of the agency.

Dan Mendelson, president of the consulting firm Avalere Health and a Clinton administration veteran, said Azar's credibility comes from an understanding of federal programs and HHS divisions like Medicare, Medicaid and the Food and Drug Administration.

"He has policy wonk credentials," said Mendelson, a Democrat who has known Azar for about 20 years and considers him a friend. "I can't think of a better person to tackle the opioids crisis, for example, because he understands all the different levers."

Associated Press writers Tom Murphy and Brian Slodysko in Indianapolis and Stephen Braun in Washington contributed to this report.

SUVs are main attraction at L.A. Auto Show

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The floor at this year's Los Angeles Auto Show will look a lot like America's roads: full of SUVs.

Hyundai and Nissan will debut new small SUVs at the show, while Subaru will take the wraps off its new three-row SUV, the Ascent. Jeep will show a new version of its rough-and-tumble Wrangler, while Infiniti, Lexus, Lincoln and Porsche will debut more refined models.

A combination of low gas prices, growing millennial families and a host of new models is fueling the SUV boom. As of October, overall U.S. vehicle sales were down 2 percent compared to the same period last year, but SUV sales were up 6 percent, according to Autodata Corp.

The L.A. show will also have plenty of eco-friendly models in a nod to California buyers, who purchase a higher percentage of hybrids and electrics than the U.S. as a whole thanks to state tax credits and other incentives. Land Rover will debut its first-ever plug-in gas-electric hybrid, while Volkswagen will show its upcoming family of electric vehicles. Porsche will also have a plug-in hybrid.

Here are some of the vehicles being unveiled at the show, which opens to the public on Friday.

LINCOLN NAUTILUS

Lincoln's midsize MKX SUV gets a new name, Nautilus, in an effort to separate itself from the alphanumeric luxury crowd. It also gets its first refresh since it went on sale in 2015. The 2019 Nautilus swaps its V6 engine for two turbocharged four-cylinder choices: a 2.0-liter that puts out 245 horsepower or a 2.7-liter with 335 horsepower. The Nautilus adopts Lincoln's signature mesh grille. It also has a suite of new safety technologies, including a system that keeps the SUV centered in its lane and an evasive maneuvering system that can automatically steer the vehicle around obstacles. The 2019 Nautilus goes on sale in the spring.

CHEVROLET CORVETTE ZR1 CONVERTIBLE

The fastest, most powerful version of General Motors Co.'s Chevrolet Corvette gets its first drop-top in nearly a half-century. Chevrolet says the convertible won't hurt the 755-horsepower car's performance much. It's only 60 pounds heavier than the standard coupe and still will have a top speed of over 200 miles per hour. The only changes for the convertible are the structure for the car's folding top and repositioned seat belt mounts. The 2019 ZR1 made its debut earlier this month in Dubai. The ZR1 last had a convertible in its original model year in 1970. The coupe starts at \$119,995 including shipping, while the convertible starts at \$123,995. They'll hit showrooms this spring.

INFINITI QX50

Infiniti's midsize, five-seat SUV gets a complete overhaul, starting with a rigid but lightweight new underbody made from high-strength steel. The 2019 QX50 sits up higher than the outgoing model and has a beefier, more confident look. Under the hood is what Infiniti says is the world's first production-ready variable compression ratio engine. The 2.0-liter turbocharged four-cylinder automatically adjusts the pis-

tons' performance to optimize power or fuel efficiency. Infiniti says the engine delivers 268 horsepower and 27 miles per gallon in combined city and highway driving, a 35 percent improvement in fuel efficiency over the outgoing QX50. The new QX50 also boasts Infiniti's ProPilot driver assistance system that can automatically control braking and speed and keep the SUV within its lane. The QX50 goes on sale in the first quarter of 2018.

SUBARU ASCENT

Known for its small all-wheel-drive cars and SUVs, Subaru enters the big people-hauler market with the new Ascent. It's got three rows of seats and can carry as many as eight people. Built in Lafayette, Indiana, the Ascent will be sold only in North America to satisfy its thirst for bigger vehicles. The all-wheel-drive Ascent is powered by a new 2.4-liter turbocharged four-cylinder engine. Second-row captain's chairs are optional on some versions. The price wasn't released, but the Ascent will go on sale next summer.

Asian shares mixed following North Korean missile launch

By ELAINE KURTENBACH, AP Business Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Shares are mixed in Asia following a broad rally on Wall Street that lifted U.S. stocks to a milestone-shattering finish. Investors appeared to shrug off the latest launch of a ballistic missile by North Korea.

KEEPING SCORE: Japan's Nikkei 225 index gained 0.3 percent to 22,552.38, while South Korea's Kospi was almost unchanged at 2,513.42. Australia's S&P ASX 200 added 0.6 percent to 6,059.59. The Hang Seng index in Hong Kong fell 0.3 percent to 29,590.11 and the Shanghai Composite index sank 0.7 percent to 3,312.05. Shares in Southeast Asia were mixed.

WALL STREET: Banks led gains, along with industrial stocks, retailers and health care companies. Investors were encouraged by news that a Senate committee cleared the way for a tax reform bill to go before the full Senate. Financial stocks also got a boost from Federal Reserve chair nominee Jerome Powell, who told another Senate committee that the Fed would consider easing up on bank regulations. The S&P 500 index rose 1 percent to 2,627.04. The Dow Jones industrial average gained 1.1 percent to 23,836.71 and the Nasdaq composite added 0.5 percent to 6,912.36. The Russell 2000 index of smaller-company stocks picked up 1.5 percent, to 1,536.43. Gainers outnumbered decliners more than 2 to 1 on the New York Stock Exchange.

NORTH KOREA MISSILE: North Korea on Wednesday ended its longest pause in missile tests this year with what appeared to be its most powerful version yet of an intercontinental ballistic missile meant to target the United States. North Korea's 20th launch of a ballistic missile this year adds to fears that the North will soon have a military arsenal that can viably target the U.S. mainland. But it barely registered in regional markets.

ANALYST'S TAKE: "The markets seem to be more immune than in the past to North Korea's missile testing and, taking cues from the overnight reaction, we can expect a muted reaction in the Asian session today," Prakash Sakpal of ING said in a commentary.

U.S. DATA BOOST: Investors got a double dose of encouraging U.S. economic data when the Conference Board said its consumer confidence index rose this month to its highest level in 17 years. Economic growth clocked at a healthy 3 percent annual pace in the third quarter, and the unemployment rate fell to a 17-year low of 4.1 percent. A separate index showed U.S. home prices rose at the fastest pace in more than three years in September.

ENERGY: Benchmark U.S. crude gave up 30 cents to \$57.69 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. It dropped 12 cents to settle at \$57.99 a barrel on Tuesday. Brent crude, used to price international oils, lost 35 cents to \$62.89 per barrel. It declined 23 cents to close at \$63.61 in London.

CURRENCIES: The dollar rose to 111.52 Japanese yen from 111.46 yen on Tuesday. The euro rose to \$1.1850 from \$1.1839.

AP Business Writer Alex Veiga in Los Angeles contributed to this story.

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Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, Nov. 29, the 333rd day of 2017. There are 32 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Nov. 29, 1947, the U.N. General Assembly passed a resolution calling for the partitioning of Palestine between Arabs and Jews; 33 members, including the United States, voted in favor of the resolution, 13 voted against while 10 abstained. (The plan, rejected by the Arabs, was never implemented.)

On this date:

In 1530, Cardinal Thomas Wolsey (WOOL'-zee), onetime adviser to England's King Henry VIII, died.

In 1890, the first Army-Navy football game was played at West Point, New York; Navy defeated Army, 24-0. The Imperial Diet, forerunner of Japan's current national legislature, opened its first session.

In 1924, Italian composer Giacomo Puccini died in Brussels before he could complete his opera "Turandot." (It was finished by Franco Alfano.)

In 1956, the musical comedy "Bells Are Ringing," starring Judy Holliday, opened on Broadway.

In 1961, Enos the chimp was launched from Cape Canaveral aboard the Mercury-Atlas 5 spacecraft, which orbited earth twice before returning.

In 1967, U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara announced he was leaving the Johnson administration to become president of the World Bank.

In 1972, the coin-operated video arcade game Pong, created by Atari, made its debut at Andy Capp's Tavern in Sunnyvale, California.

In 1981, actress Natalie Wood drowned in a boating accident off Santa Catalina Island, California, at age 43.

In 1986, actor Cary Grant died in Davenport, Iowa, at age 82.

In 1987, a Korean Air 707 jetliner en route from Abu Dhabi to Bangkok was destroyed by a bomb planted by North Korean agents with the loss of all 115 people aboard.

In 1991, 17 people were killed in a 164-vehicle pileup during a dust storm on Interstate 5 near Coalinga, California. Actor Ralph Bellamy died in Santa Monica, California, at age 87.

In 2001, George Harrison, the "quiet Beatle," died in Los Angeles following a battle with cancer; he was 58.

Ten years ago: A court in Sudan convicted British teacher Gillian Gibbons of insulting Islam for letting her pupils name a teddy bear "Muhammad" and sentenced her to 15 days in prison. (Gibbons was pardoned after spending more than a week in custody; she then left the country.) Pakistan's president, Pervez Musharraf (pur-VEHZ' moo-SHAH'-ruhv), embarked on a new, five-year term as a civilian president, a day after ceding the powerful post of army chief. Former congressman Henry Hyde, R-Ill., died in Chicago at age 83. Former General Motors chief executive Roger B. Smith died in Detroit at age 82.

Five years ago: The United Nations voted overwhelmingly to recognize a Palestinian state, a vote that came exactly 65 years after the General Assembly adopted a plan to divide Palestine into separate states for Jews and Arabs. (The vote was 138 in favor; nine members, including the United States, voted against and 41 abstained.) President Barack Obama had lunch with defeated Republican nominee Mitt Romney in the White House's private dining room; the White House says they discussed America's leadership in the world.

One year ago: President-elect Donald Trump continued to fill out his Cabinet, choosing former Goldman Sachs executive Steven Mnuchin (mih-NOO'-shin) as secretary of the Treasury Department, Georgia Rep. Tom Price to oversee the nation's health care system, and Elaine Chao, a former labor secretary and the wife of Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, to lead the Department of Transportation. Regional leaders and tens of thousands of Cubans jammed the Plaza of the Revolution in Havana, celebrating Fidel Castro on the spot where he delivered fiery speeches to mammoth crowds in the years after he seized power.

Today's Birthdays: Hall of Fame sportscaster Vin Scully is 90. Former French President Jacques Chirac

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is 85. Blues singer-musician John Mayall is 84. Actress Diane Ladd is 82. Songwriter Mark James is 77. Composer-musician Chuck Mangione is 77. Country singer Jody Miller is 76. Pop singer-musician Felix Cavaliere (The Rascals) is 75. Former Olympic skier Suzy Chaffee is 71. Actor Jeff Fahey is 65. Movie director Joel Coen is 63. Actor-comedian-celebrity judge Howie Mandel is 62. Former Homeland Security Director Janet Napolitano is 60. Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel is 58. Actress Cathy Moriarty is 57. Actress Kim Delaney is 56. Actor Tom Sizemore is 56. Actor Andrew McCarthy is 55. Actor Don Cheadle is 53. Actor-producer Neill Barry is 52. Musician Wallis Buchanan is 52. Pop singer Jonathan Knight (New Kids on the Block) is 49. Rock musician Martin Carr (Boo Radleys) is 49. Actress Jennifer Elise Cox is 48. Actor Larry Joe Campbell is 47. Rock musician Frank Delgado (Deftones) is 47. Actress Paola Turbay is 47. Contemporary Christian singer Crowder is 46. Actress Gena Lee Nolin is 46. Actor Brian Baumgartner is 45. Actor Julian Ovenden is 42. Actress Anna (AH'-nuh) Faris is 41. Gospel singer James Fortune is 40. Actress Lauren German is 39. Rapper The Game is 38. Actress Janina Gavankar is 37. Rock musician Ringo Garza is 36. Actor-comedian John Milhiser is 36. Actor Lucas Black is 35. Actor Diego Boneta is 27. Actress Lovie Simone (TV: "Greenleaf") is 19.

Thought for Today: "If moderation is a fault, then indifference is a crime." — Jack Kerouac, American author (1922-1969).